

Save the Date!

CONFERENCE 2007

Salisbury University

Wicomico County

July 27-29

The keynote speaker
will be

renowned author

and naturalist

Scott Weidensaul.



The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

VOL. 26, NO. 4

CONFERENCE 2006 WRAP-UP ALLEGANY COUNTY



Tim Gallagher, this year's keynote speaker, took some time out to visit with kids from the Youth Division of MOS who were attending the conference and, some of them, presenting their research at the poster session. Photo courtesy of Wayne Bell.

Rocky Gap State Park, Allegany County and its handsome lodge provided a beautiful setting for the annual MOS conference. This was a new location for us, and it offered the 262 registrants many new birding experiences. As usual, it was difficult to choose among field trips, with places like Green Ridge State Forest, Finzel Swamp, and Warrior Mountain, as well as the wonderful trails around Rocky Gap State Park itself. There was even an open house featuring many bird feeders, thanks to local artists Penny Knobel-Besa and Hilmar Gottesthal.

her usual superb job with the Nature Art Exhibit. The Silent Auction and Raffle, headed by Maryanne Dolan and with the help of Joy and Tom Loomis, Laddie Flyger, Jean and Larry Fry, and Anne Marie Raterman, earned a record \$3,117.74. T-shirt sales, managed by Joy Aso and John Malcolm, brought in an additional \$726; all monies were earmarked for the Atlas Project. (The raffle's super-prize, the Havre de Grace Getaway Package put together by Harford Chapter members Marsha and Dave Webb, was scooped up by Research Chair Gwen Brewer.)

—Janet Shields
Chair, Conference Committee

LISTERS' TRIPS

The six folks on the Allegany County Listers Trip found a total of 89 species, not too bad considering we didn't get started until 6:00 am and were back in time for Wine and Cheese. We didn't have any "hard-to-believe" misses, either. The highlight for many was a Ruffed Grouse that strutted in the middle of the road and tried to attack our vehicles before deciding that we really weren't much of a challenge. We atlased a little bit and got 9 confirmations, a probable, and a few noteworthy observations, including Bald Eagles at Town Creek Aqueduct. We visited much of Green Ridge Road, Oldtown, Town Creek Aqueduct, North Branch, Cumberland Terminus, Riverside Park, Old Legislative Road, and Dan's Mountain State Park.

—J. B. Churchill

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For the Garrett Listers trip, Aaron Holochwost and I had 101 species with 20 species of warbler. We found 98 species in Garrett County and three in Allegany County en route (immature Bald Eagle, Black Vulture, and fly-by Peregrine Falcon). For three weeks prior to the trip, Aaron and I scouted the area hard for reliable spots to find birds. Our top birds in Garrett were Yellow-breasted Chat, Prairie Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, and Yellow-throated Warbler, as well as Garrett County specialties such as Canada Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and Winter Wren. We also had a Virginia Rail calling at Finzel Swamp. All in all the trip was a great success and lots of fun; it is always good to get out and bird with others.

—Mikey Lutmerding

The Maryland Yellowthroat Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by September 29, 2006 for the November/December 2006 issue.

Illustrations pages 1, 11, and 14
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Photograph page 21 © Bob Mumford.

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

Chapter Achievement Award (NEW)

- ★ **Kent County Bird Club** for greatest membership growth in 2005–2006.

Attaboy/Attagirl

- ★ **Linda Keenan** for her professionalism and initiative as MOS Membership Chair.
- ★ **Andy Martin** for taking charge of the Calendar for the MOS *Yellowthroat* and punctually and precisely preparing this important listing.
- ★ **George Radcliffe** for his energy and creativity in launching the new Youth Division of MOS.
- ★ **Mike Bowen** for directing the dynamic debut of MOS Statewide Educational Activities with the wonderful Warbler Workshop.

Blood, Sweat & Tears

- ★ **George Alderson** for wielding his powerful prose to aid the MOS Conservation Committee in defending against the forces of habitat destruction attacking from all sides.
- ★ **Helene Gardel** for wrestling our financial numbers into place, and even making them balance, as chair of the MOS Budget Committee.

Valued Service Award

- ★ **Charlotte Folk** for more than 40 years of extraordinary devotion to the care and maintenance of the MOS Carey Run Sanctuary.
- ★ **Fran Saunders** for her 10 years of dedication, artistry, and technical skill in creating and maintaining the MOS website.

Plaque

- ★ **Jane Coskren** for her outstanding leadership of the 2002–2006 Maryland/D.C. Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

Trophy

- ★ **John Malcolm:** Czar of Certificates, Master of Mugs, Prince of Plaques, and All-around Awesome Ace of Awards.

POSTER SESSION

Gender Determination of Grasshopper Sparrows, Comparing Behavioral, Morphological, and Molecular Techniques. Frank K. Ammer, Petra Bohall Wood, and Roger J. McPherson.

Central Appalachian Goshawk Project: The First 12 Years. David F. Brinker, MD DNR, and J. Steve Huy.

* *A Study of Nocturnal Bird Migration in the Appalachian Mountains of Western Maryland.* Jo Anna Leachman and J. Edward Gates, UMD Center for Environmental Sciences, Frostburg.

The Effects of Forest Fragmentation on Forest Interior Bird Species Diversity on a Coastal Watershed Landscape. Christina Brinster, Amanda Spears, and Jessica White, Centreville Middle School.

* *Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship at Adventure.* Gemma Radko.

Waterbird Distribution along an Estuarine Gradient in Winter. Christopher W. Swarth, Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary.

* *MOS Research Award Recipient.*

SURVEY

HELP MOS BE MORE RESPONSIVE

1. If asked to describe what the state MOS does (besides hold the annual conference), what would you answer?
2. How can the state MOS better serve individual members?
3. How can the state MOS better serve the chapters?
4. Are there any statewide projects you'd like to see launched in the next few years?
5. The state MOS has many committees and active projects. Would you like to help by joining one of these groups?
6. Suggestions or comments for particular committees?

President's Corner New Beginnings

by Marcia Balestri

Doing something for the first time is tough, especially when you are stepping into the shoes of someone as creative as Janet Millenson. Not only has Janet done a great job as President these past two years, but she also penned a very entertaining President's Corner. Unfortunately for you, I am not as inventive, but I do hope to talk about issues that affect birds and birders locally, nationally, and even internationally, and how we can make an impact. And maybe have a little fun, too!

I'd like to take this first column to review a survey passed out at this year's conference, and consider how we might implement some of your suggestions. First, let me thank everyone who responded to the survey. *(For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to fill it out, the questions are in the box to the left.)* I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at president@mdbirds.org, call me at 301-473-5098, or, if you wish to remain anonymous, send me a letter at 7922 Edgewood Church Road, Frederick, MD 21702.

We received a lot of great suggestions, and several central themes emerged. One fundamental need, noted by most everyone, is for better communication, not only between the state organization and members, but also across chapters and among members. At our last meeting, the Executive Board agreed that, among other things, MOS deserves a listserver of its own separate from MDOsprey. Norm Saunders, who owns the MDOsprey listserver, has exhibited much patience and forbearance when we impose on his listserver to conduct MOS business, but MDOsprey is for bird sightings and trips in MD. MOS needs a venue to discuss club business, swap best practices among chapters, make last-minute changes to meetings or field trips, coordinate joint field trips, set up committee meetings, consider conservation strategies, and address a host of other issues that have nothing to do with MD bird sightings.

Another central theme focused on activities that benefit chapters across the state, such as workshops, statewide social events, fundraising activities, and membership drives. We have already made some

inroads in this area. The Warbler Workshop at the Conference was a great success, and more like it are planned, but it is clear the membership would like to see more and varied events.

The survey also elicited comments about opportunities to serve on the State Board and better representation on the Board from across the state. I can assure you that we welcome any volunteers, no matter where they are from. Currently two chairs—Publicity Coordinator and Development Chair—are open. These positions are crucial for MOS's future and, based on survey comments, we desperately need chairs and committee members to help with these activities.

Many proposals for statewide activities centered on the numerous conservation and environmental issues facing MOS. Maureen Harvey has been doing an outstanding job of keeping up with these concerns, and you can find out more about these developments in her column. We need to get the word out to the membership in a timely fashion about what we are doing to address such matters. Those letters you write to Congress do make a difference, and perhaps the new listserver can be of help here, too.

Several folks suggested a topic near and dear to my heart—a Maryland Birding Trail(s) with associated guide. This project was proposed to the Board five years ago, but the Breeding Bird Atlas, already in the works, needed all available resources. Now that atlas fieldwork is coming to a close, we can start looking towards developing state trails. I want to form an ad hoc committee to work on this project. I have also spoken with Sally O'Byrne, president of the Delaware Ornithological Society, about a joint effort; we are meeting in August to explore that possibility. Along the same line is the suggestion for a guide to the birding spots of Maryland. If anyone is interested in either of these projects, please let me know.

I was a bit disconcerted by several suggestions, because we are clearly not getting the word out about some tools that are already available, tasks that we have accomplished, or activities that are already in the works. I would urge you to explore our website at www.mdbirds.org to familiarize yourselves with the valuable information that it contains, including an updated speakers' list and maps/directions to MOS sanctuaries/birding hotspots.

You want Warbler Workshop for the chapters? This wonderful tool will be available to each chapter as soon as the Statewide Educational Activities Committee modifies the disks to comply with copyright agreements we made with some of the photographers.

You want New Member packets? Linda Keenan has been working on putting together New Member packages, and they are available to all chapters. I am so glad we will have these. When I first joined, it took a year before I realized that there was such a thing as a state organization. (Of course, that may be more of a personal problem than an MOS problem!)

More youth involvement? A youth birding competition? Voila! George Radcliffe, the Youth Programs Chair, sponsored a youth competition in April at Wye Island Natural Resources Management Area. George has been working hard to set this and other youth activities in motion. You can find out more about this at the YMOS website at <http://www.qacps.k12.md.us/bird/mos/youth.htm>.

I have touched on just a few of the great suggestions that people made, and I will pass along the others to committee chairs. If we could implement all these ideas, the State MOS organization could clearly do a wonderful job of serving members and chapters. Now all we need are the volunteers accomplish these projects. Only two respondents were brave enough to put their names down to help out with committee activities. It's fine to say, "We need to do statewide fundraising," or "We should do more publicity," or "More articles about this or that in the *Yellowthroat*," but folks need to come forward and offer their special talents. I have noticed that, when things need to be done, it's the same individuals who step up to the plate. I worry about the future of this organization when these industrious people decide they have done enough. I know everyone is busy, but if you can find a few spare minutes each month, please volunteer. Then, many of these suggestions can be tackled with ease.

Okay, enough lecturing. Let me hear from you. I hope everyone has a wonderful fall with good birding, and that I will see you in the field. That, ultimately, is what we are all about.



REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND MARYLAND/D.C. BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

BY WALTER ELLISON

As I write this article we are still, quite literally, in the heat of the last atlas campaign. However, as you read this piece, the second Maryland and District of Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas Project will be practically complete. A handful of birds will still be nesting during September, but they are mostly common birds already recorded in their blocks. Great Horned Owls could still be sought one last time in late December, and Rock Pigeons never fall outside of atlas safe dates. There is still room for a bit of nipping and tucking, but for most atlasers the effort will have ceased.

At the close of July, the statistics for the 2002-2006 project are already impressive. As of July 23, more than 500 volunteers had recorded data in 1,276 blocks, reported over 51,000 hours (40 hours/block), and registered 71 bird species per block. As I perused a large cross-section of species summaries at the Patuxent public data display, I was impressed with how often we have exceeded nesting confirmation rates from the 1980s atlas for common bird species. I have high hopes that the coverage numbers will be even more impressive by September.

There will be time during the next year and more to analyze the numbers produced during this project, but for now I want to address the less tangible benefits of atlasing. As I wrote in the September/October 2004 *Maryland Yellowthroat*, atlas birding makes better birders and naturalists. You become attuned to where birds live, and look for them every time you see a good-looking spot. I cannot cross a viny, shrub-filled stream corridor on the Upper Shore without saying to myself, "An Acadian Flycatcher or Kentucky Warbler could be lurking here." You notice new birding spots, accessible and birdy places where you have never ventured before. You achieve a level of intimacy with many birds that you never expected. Nancy and I recently found not one, but three, Acadian Flycatcher nests in a single afternoon. How do Acadians make do with such a flimsy-looking construction? The sense of connection to the landscape and its birds that atlasing brings is beyond price. I hope all of you atlasers are already looking forward to the next bird project, and even to the next atlas two decades hence.



Birds of Note —by Les Roslund

- Most birders travel to Florida to observe ANHINGA, but such a trip was not necessary for Maryland birders this year. A beautiful and graceful ANHINGA showed up at Lilypons Water Gardens, Frederick County, on April 18 and stayed around until at least April 23. Many people were able to obtain excellent views, though often the views were of the bird soaring higher and higher until it disappeared. The markings of the bird indicated it was a juvenile or female.
- On May 21 seven avid Maryland birders decided to check out the shorebirds and anything else available in portions of Harford County, including the Tydings mudflats of the Susquehanna River. Numerous great shorebirds were present, including 20 WHIMBREL. As luck would have it, the tide was rising and soon the WHIMBREL had to take flight. When they did, John Hubbell yelled out that one of them had a white rump. All eyes and binocs and scopes soon locked on that bird as the flock flew back and forth trying to find a safe place for landing. A Maryland first: EUROPEAN WHIMBREL! To make matters somewhat easier for the records committee, Bill Hubick even managed to get some photos of the bird, using a stacked lens system that provided an effective focal length of 1,680 mm. Nothing beats being prepared!



Black-bellied Whistling Duck taken by George Jett on June 6, 2006.

- In early June, a call to the Voice of the Naturalist drew attention to the presence of a BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK in the large pond at the Washingtonian Center in Gaithersburg, Montgomery County. Many area birders flocked to the site, and from June 4 to at least June 23 they were not disappointed. This brightly colored bird made itself right at home amongst the resident Canada Geese and Mallards, and it was soon holding its own in the battle for the food scraps that visitors toss to pond regulars.



DNR Reports by Glenn Therres: Bird Flu

Bird flu has made headlines frequently this past year. Avian Influenza (AI), as it is officially known, is a viral disease that affects the respiratory and digestive systems of most species of domestic and wild birds. AI comes in two basic forms: High-Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI), which is rapidly fatal among birds, and Low-Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI), a mild, often undetected disease that frequently affects wild bird populations.

There are a number of subtypes of HPAI. The one of major concern is H5N1. An Asian variety of H5N1 has been transmitted from chickens to humans, and it commands the attention of health agencies around the world.

Initially found in Southeast Asia, H5N1 has spread to other places in Asia, parts of Europe, the Near East, and most recently Africa. The primary means of spread is believed to be the transport of domestic poultry. Although wild birds have been documented with AI in the affected areas, the evidence to date does not suggest the disease has been spread by wild birds; however, that remains a possibility.

(Birds of Note continued)

Quite a debate raged about the possibility of the bird being an escapee, but reviews of sightings around the region over the past several years suggest the species may actually be extending its range.

- Another fascinating visitor to the region in June was a SOUTHERN LAPWING discovered on private property in Worcester County, but in an area accessible only by boat. Naturally it was Mark Hoffman who found this one. A few subsequent attempts to relocate the bird did not meet with success. Questions about whether this South American bird was actually an escapee will be difficult to resolve.
- This summer Talbot County has hosted several birds that seem to have missed the signals about migration. On June 7 a YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER showed up in a yard in St. Michaels. On June 21 a CANVASBACK was loitering around the pilings of Claiborne Landing; this bird was seen again in early July. And the Poplar Island Bird Census of July 7 turned up a SHORT-EARED OWL. Though SHORT-EARED OWLS have not been regular summer visitors in our region in recent years, Bob Ringle provided a reminder that they were a nesting species in Dorchester County in the 1920s and 1930s.

One potential source for the spread of H5N1 to North America is through infected migratory birds. If such were to occur, the more likely pathway would be from Asia to Alaska, since more than 30 species of birds migrate between these areas. Fewer species migrate between Europe and eastern North America, but the possibility exists for H5N1 to enter North America by crossing the Atlantic. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and seabirds are the species that link the continents.

As part of its strategy for preparedness and response to AI, the federal government has launched an extensive monitoring effort. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and a broad array of state, local, and non-government agencies are conducting capture, sampling, and testing programs to detect H5N1 or other viruses in North American migratory birds. The main focus of the early-detection program is on Alaska and elsewhere in the Pacific flyway. Additional efforts are under way in the other flyways, and Maryland DNR is a part of this early-detection effort.

In Maryland, as in many other states, DNR will be collecting samples for testing from live and hunter-killed waterfowl. (We actually started last year, with the cooperation of Ohio State University.) In 2006, DNR will collect cloacal swab samples from 800 live or hunter-killed waterfowl, and send them in for testing. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will also collect 800 cloacal samples from Maryland waterfowl, as well as 1,000 fecal samples. The target species in Maryland are Tundra Swan, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Canvasback, Greater Snow Goose, and Atlantic Brant. We will also collect samples from resident Canada Geese and captive-raised Mallards. During waterfowl hunting season, DNR biologists will be asking hunters for permission to collect cloacal samples from harvested ducks and geese.

Hopefully, we will not detect HPAI H5N1. Last year in Maryland, LPAI—which is not transmittable to humans—was detected in two species of scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Greater Snow Goose, and Mute Swan.

Bird flu is not restricted to waterfowl; all wild birds are susceptible. We are interested in learning of any die-offs of large numbers of birds. We encourage anyone finding a large number of dead birds in a given area to report such to our toll free number (1-877-463-6497).

As birdwatchers, you may be asked by friends, family, or neighbors about bird flu. I encourage you to stay abreast of the facts. Several websites provide good information, including those of:

- DNR (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us>);
- the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (www.fws.gov/migratory_birds/issues/Avian_Flu);
- the Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>).

Keep your fingers crossed that the Asian form of H5N1 does not reach North America.

The Conservation Connection

By Maureen F. Harvey



US 50 Alternative Threatens Wetlands

To improve evacuation from Ocean City, the Maryland Department of Transportation (DOT) and State Highway Administration (SHA) are considering adding an alternative route in the vicinity of the US 50 bridge that crosses into West Ocean City. One route that is receiving favorable consideration, known as Alternative 6, would add a new bridge north of the existing one. The SHA study group has focused on preserving the water bird colonies on Skimmer Island but given scant attention to the environmental impact to the rest of the bay. The Alternative 6 roadway and bridge would damage one of the few remaining areas of open wetlands on the bay in West Ocean City, including the 200-acre Elliott's Pond (north of Skimmer Island). In addition, 3.2 acres of wetlands would be directly shaded by the new bridge. More information is available at www.westoceancity.org, and a photo of Alternate 6 with Elliott's Pond and the wetlands outlined in blue may be found at <http://www.westoceancity.org/westoc/DSCN1337.JPG>. Alternative 6 is projected to cost over \$250,000,000, more than double the cost of the other alternatives. You may wish to contact both MD-DOT and SHA with your concerns.

Ask Gubernatorial Candidates to Support Program Open Space

Maryland has an aggressive goal of permanently protecting as much land as is developed, or 50 percent of the land in the state. Program Open Space (POS) was created to enable the state to meet this goal. Since 1969, every Marylander who has purchased a home has paid a real estate transfer tax to fund land conservation programs. This dedicated funding source is intended to build parks, protect forests and open space and preserve farms.

From 2003 to 2005, \$400 million in POS monies was diverted to other purposes. To help ensure full funding for POS in the coming years, consider asking both major-party candidates for Governor to pledge not to divert funding from POS. Write, e-mail, or phone Baltimore City Mayor Martin O'Malley (City Hall Room 250, 100 N. Holliday St., Baltimore, MD 21202, mayor@baltimorecity.gov, 410-396-3835) and Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. (100 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, send e-mail from the Internet site www.gov.state.md.us/mail/, 1-800-811-8336 or 410-974-3901) to ask if they pledge to fully fund this crucial program.

Controversy Surrounds Proposed Resort Near Blackwater NWR

The proposed Blackwater Resort Communities development would place 2,700 homes, a golf course, a retail center, a hotel, and a conference center on 1,000 acres of farmland on Egypt Road very close to Blackwater NWR, south of Cambridge. The US Fish and Wildlife Service staff at Blackwater have voiced serious concerns about the development's impact on the Little Blackwater River, which forms one boundary of the project site and drains into Blackwater NWR.

In June 2006, the Cambridge Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission voted to allow the development to go forward. The project must receive additional approvals from the P&Z Commission, the Cambridge City Council, and the MD Critical Area Commission. In July 2006, the Critical Area Commission held a hearing on the proposed resort and will make a decision very soon (perhaps by press time). The Commission, which is responsible for ensuring that development within 1,000 feet of any MD tidal tributary does not threaten water quality, is evaluating local government decisions to rezone the Blackwater Resort project site from "resource conservation" to "intensive development."

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation believes that the resort development is the wrong project in the wrong place. It has asked the US Dept of Interior (based on the property's proximity to Blackwater NWR) to oppose the resort, and it is asking the public to contact the Commission about rejecting the application based on a lack of sound science, the failure of the applicant to provide a thorough and unbiased water quality study, and the threats to the irreplaceable Blackwater NWR. The Commission Chairman has assured MOS that our letter to the Commission of last fall will remain a part of their case record.

Ehrlich Administration Pushes Ahead With Intercounty Connector

The Washington Post reported that the SHA notified roughly 350 families in June and July 2006 that the state plans to seize part of their property for construction of the ICC. MOS signed on to a letter with other environmental organizations asking the Montgomery County Planning Commission not to sell any county land to the state without careful consideration, because nearly every acre of the county land sought by the State for the ICC is forested and provides a vital storm buffer to our streams and communities.

Teaming with Wildlife Assesses State Wildlife Grants

A "five-year accomplishment report" for State Wildlife Grants was released and distributed in July. Despite recent efforts to reduce the annual federal appropriations to State Wildlife Grants, this program remains an essential core effort to protect wildlife from becoming endangered and is a critical source of federal funds for state-based wildlife

diversity programs. Every state has now completed a “wildlife action plan,” outlining the species that are in need of help and the practical actions that are being taken to assist them. The full report may be downloaded from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies at http://www.teaming.com/pdf/SWG_Report.pdf

MOS Protests Mountaintop-Removal/Valley-Fill Coal Mining in WV

In January 2004, MOS was one of 50 organizations signing onto an American Bird Conservancy (ABC) comment letter on the programmatic Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on mountaintop-removal/valley-fill coal mining. According to ABC's Gerald Winegrad, the Bush Administration has ignored comments from us and thousands of others and is proceeding to grant permits to strip another 380,000 acres of mature Appalachian deciduous forests and to dump the stripped rock and dirt in valleys (which would degrade or destroy another 1,000 miles of streams). Nowhere else on the North American continent is such massive land and water degradation occurring.

In June 2006, MOS signed on to another ABC letter, detailing concerns over a permit issued by the Army Corps of Engineers, which would allow 2,278 acres of mountaintop trees to be destroyed, with the fill being dumped along nearly 6 miles of stream valleys, for one new mine (Spruce No.1 mine). The ABC letter asks that the permit be rejected, pending a new EIS. Data show that this mine would significantly impact high-quality habitat for the Cerulean Warbler—a forest-breeding bird that prefers ridge tops within large blocks of mature forest. This species has suffered drastic population declines over the last several decades, has been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act, and is on the US FWS National List of Birds of Conservation Concern. Indeed, the proposed mountaintop mining would have a massive and permanent impact on the entire suite of Partners in Flight “priority mature-forest birds” in the region, including, in addition to Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Acadian Flycatcher.

Federal Land Sale Quashed

A letter-writing project initiated by George Alderson (Howard Co.) for MOS turned out well when two Bush Administration proposals to sell off hundreds of thousands of acres of federal land were left out of a key spending bill in the U.S. Senate this summer. The U.S. House had already taken similar action. Lawmakers stated the issue was dead.

Boost for Red Knots

In May 2006, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission voted to impose stricter sanctions on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay. Conservation organizations had campaigned to close the fishery altogether for two years to allow the horseshoe crab population time to recover from years of overfishing.

Red Knots and other shorebirds depend on horseshoe crab eggs to sustain them on their mammoth migration north to breed each year. The knot has declined dramatically in recent years as the egg supply has dwindled, to the point where scientists have predicted that without conservation action, it could soon go extinct. Although unwilling to impose a full moratorium, the Commission enacted a ban during the crucial spawning period (January 1 through June 7), and restricted take by DE and NJ to males only, with a cap of 100,000 crabs each per year; they also restricted the take by VA and MD. NJ acted independently to impose its own statewide full moratorium on horseshoe crabs takes for two years, further improving the Red Knot's chance of survival. However, the Red Knot is still in danger, and ABC and other groups are petitioning for it to be listed under the Endangered Species act to provide greater protection.

Report Documents Impact of Feral Cats on Birds

A new ABC report, “Impacts of Feral and Free-ranging Cats on Bird Species of Conservation Concern: A Five-State Review of New York, New Jersey, Florida, California, and Hawaii,” analyzes, for the first time, the effects that cats are having on some of America's most at-risk bird species. It illuminates troubling threats to endangered species such as Piping Plover, California Clapper Rail, and Hawaiian Petrel; it highlights the growing trend of managed cat colonies; and it reviews applicable wildlife protection laws. Download the five-state review from www.abcbirds.org/cats/NFWF.pdf

Re-Hooked on Hummingbirds

In the course of my reviews of DVD products on hummingbirds (*Yellowthroat*, May/June 2006), I noted some technical problems with a video called “Hooked on Hummingbirds,” produced by Avian Video Center (AVC) in California. Specifically, my initial copy sometimes froze, and a replacement copy ran jerkily. After reading these comments, AVC owner and producer Tom Kaminski sent me a new DVD, which runs flawlessly. He also replaced all remaining stock of this item at the ANS bookstore in Chevy Chase, Montgomery Co, where I bought my initial disk, with brand new versions. It is reassuring to know that the producer of “Hooked on Hummingbirds” values both reviewer comments and consumer satisfaction, and that the purchase of this enjoyable and informative DVD can now be recommended without reservation. The new version also covers 20 species of hummers, four more than the original.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING

MARCH 4, 2006

President: Janet Millenson
Vice-President: Marcia Balestri
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Paul Zucker

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Awards: John Malcolm
Bird Conservation Alliance: Paul Zucker

Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson
Mailing List: Helen Horrocks
Membership: Linda Keenan
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda
Yellowthroat: Lydia Schindler
Youth Programs: George Radcliffe

Allegany: Gwen Brewer
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
 Tom Bradford, Sharon Bradford,
 George Thomas

Baltimore: *not represented*

Caroline: *not represented*

Carroll: Maureen Harvey,
 Bob Ringler

Cecil: Marcia Watson

Frederick: Gayle Bach-Watson,
 Helen Horrocks

Harford: Thomas Congersky,
 Russell Kovach

Howard: Jane Coskren,
 Karen Darcy, Jeff Friedhoffer,
 Tom Strikwerda, Kate Tufts

Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin

Montgomery: Michael Bowen,
 Judy McCartney, Helen Patton,
 Rick Sussman

Patuxent: Fred Fallon,
 Linda Keenan

Talbot: George Radcliffe

Tri-County: *not represented*

Washington: Shirley Ford,
 Anna Hutzell

President Janet Millenson called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. and thanked the Anne Arundel Bird Club for hosting the meeting at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center in Millersville.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge noted that the low amount in the quarterly Treasurer's Report shown under dues reflects the fact that approximately \$4,000 is due from the Baltimore Bird Club. This will be received shortly. Also, deposits are currently being made for the 2006 conference and are reflected in the report.

President's Remarks: Janet Millenson still has committee openings that need filling—Publicity and Development. Janet has tried to break down these jobs so that the burden on any one person is not too great. She also asks that people let us know if they are unable to complete an MOS task.

CHAPTER REPORTS—*none*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Atlas: Jane Coskren reported that there are many atlas volunteers but, since this is the last year, help with data collection for some of the sparsely covered areas would be appreciated. Data collection is the most important help needed at this time.

Walter Ellison is taking applications for people to do blockbusting and has had fewer responses this year than previously. A CD with WAV files is being made for atlasting night birds. Anyone wanting a copy should contact Walter. There will be an article in the next *Yellowthroat* with guidelines on how to use the CD.

Awards: John Malcolm reminded the chapters that he will create awards for them or help them make their awards. He had examples of the kind of work he has done for the chapter presidents. He also creates awards for committee chairs. Awards may also be given to non-MOS members who have made a significant contribution to ecology, birding, and conservations.

Conference Pin Contest: John Malcolm announced the winner of the 2006 conference pin contest was Janet Millenson. The winning design

is of a Turkey Vulture soaring over a mountain ridge.

Budget: Emmalyn Holdridge explained the budget process to the board. The budget for May 1, 2006–April 30, 2007 was presented to the board for questions and approval. After general discussion, it was approved by the board.

Conference: Janet Shields reported that the conference registration brochure will be in the mail by early April. Helen Horrocks will be preparing the program package found in the registration packet. Maryanne Dolan is looking volunteers to lead specialty birding trips (owls, shorebirds, etc.) that will be put up for bidding at the silent auction.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey urged the board to consider contacting legislators to encourage funding of Program Open Space. The proposed development of land adjacent to Blackwater was discussed. George Alderson, Howard Co., has applied his expertise to prepare letters for the Howard Chapter and MOS on two major threats to our federal lands. See the May/June *Yellowthroat* for more details.

Investment: Because she was unable to attend, Martha Waugh's written report was included in the board meeting packet. The value of our investments is up. As of 1/31/06, the total value of MOS investments is \$1,452,126.

Membership: Linda Keenan took suggestions for best practices compiled by Janet Millenson several years ago and added to it, using suggestions from Carroll, Kent, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Patuxent Chapters. She handed out the new MOS Chapters' Best Practices, which includes many excellent suggestions for maintaining and increasing MOS membership. She will be sending it out to chapter presidents. Linda passed out information compiled by Helen Horrocks reflecting membership changes by chapter for the 5/1/05–4/30/06 year. Helen found that four chapters gained members. Two chapters held steady, and 11 chapters

lost members. Overall, the organization's membership totals dropped 7%. Membership renewal rate is 82%. It should be remembered that this is not a count of individuals but a count of memberships. Also, new membership brochures are available from Janet Millenson.

Research: Gwen Brewer noted that the conference poster session is often a good way to determine how MOS research money has been used. At this time, the committee has one request for funding. Gwen is seeking poster presenters for the conference. She currently has a poster signed up that will be presented by several students from Centreville Middle School. Gwen has contacted several people who have received grant awards to see if they will come to the conference.

Sanctuary: Brent Byers was unable to attend but sent a report which was read by Janet Millenson. For Carey Run: The committee is pricing a new shed. Another drainage pipe will be purchased and installed under the road to prevent overflowing. Another load of gravel will be ordered. A home inspection is being sought to assess the condition of the house and get advice on occupancy limits and safety suggestions. A workday is scheduled for April 28. For Irish Grove: Dotty Mumford spent a week at Irish Grove in the fall. A kitchen cabinet was replaced, a firm was contacted to deliver fill for the roads, and an arborist was hired to remove the remaining trees in the fields. Donald Webster, DNR, visited and gave suggestions for habitat improvement for woodcock and waterfowl. Dotty will be at Irish Grove the week of April 8 and is looking for volunteers to help. As to the potential Prince George's County sanctuary, Brent spoke to Mid Atlantic Builders in February. Donation of the property is still planned; however, it has been delayed. Mid Atlantic is involved in a lawsuit over the entire site with one partner of the previous owner. Once the case is resolved, Mid Atlantic will pick up the donation process.

Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda announced that they received 15 scholarship applications. All were

reviewed favorably. Tom is currently reviewing the budget to determine if there is enough money to support all of them. A summary of the scholarships will be given in the next *Yellowthroat*. Tom's efforts to improve the Scholarship mailing list helped increase the number of applicants. Currently, it reflects a good range of schools, including elementary, middle and high schools.

Statewide Education Activities: Mike Bowen reported that the first workshop of his new group will be at the conference in June. On the basis of the survey taken at last year's conference, Mike is working on a warbler workshop to include 37 warbler species. It will be a PowerPoint program emphasizing adults in breeding plumage.

Youth Programs: George Radcliffe is starting to get the youth division, called YMOS, off the ground. His most difficult problem is getting the word out. George needs the chapters' help in identifying any potential teachers who might be interested in getting involved. Any group may obtain, at no cost, a group membership to YMOS. The first YMOS activity, developed by the kids and George, is a YMOS birding competition. There is a YMOS website which may be accessed through the MOS website by youth groups throughout the state which will include activities, share ideas, data and resources.

EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson announced that this year EFM went to 40 events throughout the state. The hope is that this will make a difference in the amount of money coming to EFM. Gail is looking for old birding magazines to use in work with her local middle school. Gayle needs more MOS promotional materials. The key chains are very popular.

OLD BUSINESS—none

NEW BUSINESS—none

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Chapters to announce the availability of Night Birds CD and "How-to" notes from Walter Ellison.

- Chapters to urge members to contact Nancy Martin about doing mini-routes this next year.
- Chapters to consider awards and get information to John Malcolm, smudgie@comcast.net.
- Chapters to solicit Conference Silent Auction items and trips from their members.
- Chapters to pass out new MOS brochures.
- Chapters to ask for expertise in reviewing the ICC EIS, an effort led by Greg Smith.
- Chapters to announce April 28 Work Day at Carey Run and a Work Week at Irish Grove beginning April 8.
- Chapters to advertise Warbler Workshop scheduled for Friday afternoon at the Conference.
- Chapters to e-mail Tom Strikwerda with additions to his Scholarship mailing list.
- Chapters to advertise YMOS and their upcoming activities.
- Chapters to ask members for old birding magazines to be sent to Gayle Bach-Watson, bachwats@erols.com.
- Chapters are needed to host MOS board meetings for the next year (September 2006, December 2006, and March 2007.)
- Linda Keenan to send Chapter Presidents the new Best Practices List.
- Gayle Bach-Watson to order promotional items through John Malcolm.

PAST ACTION ITEMS

- Annual chapter reports and committee reports need to be sent to Janet Millenson by May 15.
- Sanctuary Committee to draft "wish list" for items to be donated for the sanctuaries. This will be posted in the *Yellowthroat*.

President Janet Millenson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m..

Respectfully submitted by
—Janet Shields, Secretary

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.
ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL 30, 2006

Operating Fund

Income

Membership Dues	\$25,435.00
World Series of Birding	2,389.10
Sales	2,086.81
Environmental Fund of MD	1,801.86
Interest/Other	4,712.26
Donations	500.00

Total Income \$36,925.03

Expense

Affiliations, Memberships	\$ 225.00
Audit & Tax Preparation	9,085.00
Awards	1,218.90
Bulk Storage	2,672.90
Liability Insurance	5,497.80
Membership Data Base Management	438.26
Sales Tax	99.06
Telephone	981.09
Office Suppl, Postage, Copies	370.34
Maryland Yellowthroat	7,613.21
Other Publications, Website	1,572.00
World Series of Birding: Expense	561.31
WSB: Balance to Atlas Fund	1,827.79
Conservation	655.38
Environmental Fund Expense	203.11
Library	174.00
Donations/Other	329.64

Total Expense \$33,524.79

Atlas Fund

Income	\$68,096.07
Expense	\$49,023.98

Education Fund

Income	\$ 9,698.00
Expense	\$ 1,678.30

Research Fund

Income	\$ 6,124.00
Expense	\$ 1,200.00

Sanctuary Fund

Income	\$35,245.00
Expense	\$16,346.26

Scholarship Fund

Income	\$19,587.70
Expense	\$13,748.37

Conference 2005 (Total)

Income	\$30,961.15
Expense	\$30,483.76

E. Holdridge
MOS Treasurer



Fall Count 2006

The annual Fall Seasonal Count sponsored by MOS will take place on the traditional third weekend of September. The choice of date, Saturday, September 16 or Sunday, September 17, is left to local chapters and coordinators. Chapters that have not included a formal count in their programs this year are urged to plan to do so in future years.

Everyone is urged to participate, regardless of skill level. Identification is only part of being successful; you have to spot the bird first, so every pair of eyes helps.

The guidelines for this count are the same as those used for all seasonal counts. Local coordinators will assign volunteers to areas, honoring requests whenever possible. Party leaders are responsible for tracking party miles and times, names of participants, and documentation for unusual sightings. A *new* checklist compilation form, using the new AOU Supplement species sequence, is available on the MOS website, in the "Annual Counts" section: <http://www.mdbirds.org/counts/fall/fallcounts.html>

The list includes the species one would expect to find in Maryland during this season. Those species on the list requiring further written documentation are noted with asterisks. All write-ins require full details.

County coordinators who have volunteered so far are listed on the MOS website. Anyone already organizing a count or interested in volunteering as a coordinator for a county without a coordinator can contact me.

If you don't have web access or if you are interested in counting in a county without a coordinator, you can contact me directly. Individual parties or other groups (e.g. Hawk Watch sites, field trips) who count in areas without a coordinator, but have data for the count period, are asked to submit their data, along with details on what area was covered, directly to me by **October 15**.

Deadline for submitting completed reports to your county coordinator is no later than October 9, 2006. County compilers are asked to submit compilations to the state coordinator by November 1.

Please plan to join the fun and have a great day birding!

Chuck Stirrat,
Fall Count Coordinator
13318 Hunt Ridge
Ellicott City, MD 21042-1155
Home phone: 410-531-2417
E-mail: ChuckS@msualum.com (home)
Charles.Stirrat@jhuapl.edu (work)



Anne Arundel

In April, Peter Hanan led a group of MOS birders to Belize: Barbara Hanan, Janelle Dietrich, Peter Osenton, and Doug Forsell from the Anne Arundel Bird Club and Jean Wheeler from the Harford Co Bird Club. The travelers visited Hidden Valley and the Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve. They also visited the home of guide Sam Tillett, Belize's best known birder, in Crooked Tree Lagoon. In addition, they toured the well-known Mayan sites of Caracol and Lamanai. Highlights included long bumpy rides on dirt roads, staying in thatched huts and showering with frogs, and being serenaded to sleep by hundreds of Limpkins. Snail Kites were everywhere. The final stop was Caye Caulker, for a visit to the barrier reef and snorkeling. Total bird species--287, including Agami Heron, Jabiru, Great Curassow, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, White Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Stygian Owl, Rufous-breasted Spinetail, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, 25 species of flycatcher, Blue-black Grosbeak, and an Ocellated Turkey.

Congratulations to Kathie Lambert, who is a member of the Class of 2006 of the Physician Assistant Program at Anne Arundel Community College. As Kathie puts it, "Now I can get back to some bird-watching."

Baltimore

Speaking for Cylburn's Outreach and Collections Committee, Patsy Perlman noted that the April 29 opening of the Exploration Station in the Cylburn Mansion Carriage House was a big success. "We appreciate the contribution of Bob Dwight, who donated funds to move the nature collection," she says. "The exhibits were moved from an upper floor of the mansion to the carriage house. The new installation was beautifully done." Weekdays, the space will be open by appointment only—via Patsy, Joy Wheeler, or Cylburn naturalist Glenda Weber. It will open weekends only if BBC has someone on site. Elfriede Carney and Catherine Bishop each volunteered to help on two dates this summer; Patsy is still seeking additional volunteers.

Caroline

Caroline birder L.T. Short has just returned from a trip out to Yellowstone, where he did some photography. One fun shot was of a condo—a bird condo, that is: flicker, Mountain Bluebird, and Tree Swallow all sharing a tree. Another good shot shows coyotes stalking a ground squirrel (the squirrel got away this time).

Carroll

The Carroll Chapter scheduled its annual picnic at the Hoffman residence on August 12. A reporter from a local paper was to attend to photograph the group and to interview them. It also happened to be Mark Hoffman's ? birthday, and what better way to spend your birthday than with birding friends!

Harford

Harford member Jean Wheeler is currently on a birding trip to Australia. Upon her return, she will be taking over the Chapter Chatter column.

Montgomery

In addition to having lots of good birders, the Montgomery chapter seems also to count a number of fine artists in its membership. In addition to Janet Millenson, whose drawing of a soaring Turkey Vulture won the pin design contest for this year's conference, Gemma Radko designed one of two postage stamps being produced by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC). The 39-cent stamps, which feature endangered birds, are a fund-raising tool for ABC, an organization committed to protection of birds and their habitats. Gemma's design depicts a Cerulean Warbler; the second stamp shows an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. You can take a look at the stamps as well as order them by going to the ABC website at www.abcbirds.org.

Tri-County

The first Delmarva Birding Weekend was held in Wicomico County back in April 1994, under the auspices of the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art. The following year, the Maryland DNR became involved, as did the Salisbury Zoo, and for a short time the event was known as "The Watchable Wildlife Weekend." In the last few years, the Worcester County Board of Tourism has become the prime mover.

Since the beginning, members of the former Wicomico Bird Club (now Tri-County) have helped make it a success. Don and Carol Broderick handled registration in the early years, and trip leaders have included Polly Batchelder, Chris Dominick, Sam Dyke, Ellen Lawler, Betty Pitney, and the late John Dennis, among others. Leaders have also come from a number of clubs on the Western Shore. The 2006 Delmarva Weekend, May 5-7, had 35 guides leading 30 field trips, and it attracted approximately 250 attendees. The tradition lives on.

WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING 2006 • CAPE MAY, NJ MAY 13

MOS YELLOWTHROATS CAPTURE CAPE MAY COUNTY TROPHY

Tallying 179 species within 24 hours, the MOS Yellowthroats—**Captain Matt Hafner** (Harford Co), **Zach Baer** (Queen Anne's Co), **Hans Holbrook** (Howard Co), and **Jim Brighton** (Talbot Co)—took first place in the WSB's Cape May County division.

Zach—who last year had competed in and won in the senior youth division—was a welcome addition to the team. Having a fourth member meant that we could split the county into four sections, so that each of us could concentrate on a smaller area for the scouting that is so essential for a good species total.

Matt was responsible for scouting Cape May Island, the area stretching from the Cape May Canal down to Cape May Point. If you have birded Cape May, you are familiar with the hotspots: the Beanery, Higbee Beach, the Meadows, etc. The team spent a lot of time on the island searching for migrants, doing sea watches, and checking the sky for raptors.

Scouting the island also means going around and schmoozing with all the bird heads who are hanging out, and finding out what everybody else is seeing. Matt knows everyone and gleaned many key bits of advice and information from all the right people.

Hans scouted Oceanside. This is a tough area—basically an urbanized oceanside setting; you have to check all the little marinas and roadside cuts plus the large expanse of marsh between the ocean and the mainland. This is where we go to finish getting the shorebirds and herons.

Zach scouted the Delaware Bay shore of Cape May County, with its are many small landings, some going into marshes like they do in Maryland's Elliott Island, and others reaching all the way to the Bay. This time of year, the area is full of shorebirds feasting on horseshoe crab eggs. This area has held a good number of rarities over the past couple years, and this year was no exception. We searched successfully for the White-faced Ibis and unsuccessfully for the Western Grebe.

I was responsible for scouting the Belle Plain area, very similar to the Nassawango area of Worcester/Wicomico County in Maryland. It is a myriad of unnamed dirt roads, some coming to abrupt dead ends. Here is where you look for the breeding warblers, tanagers, and flycatchers.

We began the competition at the stroke of midnight on Friday and turned in our list sheet at Cape May Point State Park at 11:40 p.m. Saturday. Everyone on the team held up well, a feat not so easily accomplished while birding non-stop for 24 hours!

The day was a mixture of major triumphs and major downers. We ended up missing all of the rarities except for White-faced Ibis. We must have hit Mark Garland's backyard six different times looking for the White-winged Dove that had been so easy the day before. We sat on Stone Harbor Blvd. waiting for the Eurasian Collared-Dove to show up at its allotted time of 6:30 p.m.; at 6:35 we

decided we had wasted enough time and drove off. Paul Lehman would later tell us that not even 30 seconds after we pulled off, the dove flew onto the power line directly over where our truck had been sitting.

The Western Grebe that had been a piece of cake all week was nowhere to be seen off Cook's Beach or Reed's Beach; other teams got it with no problem. Worst of all was missing Peregrine Falcon for the second straight year. While we were scoping Nummy's Island for Tricolored Heron and Peregrine Falcon, other teams were driving by checking out where we were looking. Oh, obviously at the Peregrine Falcon sitting up nicely on the stake out in the marsh, they thought. Well, everyone was shocked that we dipped on the Falcon, even though we seemed to be looking right at it.

Highlights on the upside included a lot of birds that might seem easy but are difficult in Cape May County. Our secret spot for Kingfisher paid off for the second year in a row. Green Heron, which we had missed last year, turned up three times. We ticked Hairy Woodpecker and Wood Duck, as well as Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, and Black Tern—all very difficult species around here.

By nightfall Saturday we were down to searching for three species that could reasonably be expected: Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, and Black-billed Cuckoo. We found a secluded street in the middle of Cape May with a park bench and sat down and listened. Unfortunately, the wind was blowing and it was getting colder by the minute.

Did I mention that it was *really* cold? We sat outside, listening for migrant flight calls, and we were finally rewarded with a fly-over Swainson's Thrush. That put us at 179 species. We really wanted 180, so we continued to sit in the cold until Captain Hafner (he made us call him Captain) decided to call it quits. We would settle for 179.

I just want everyone to know how awesome it was to stand on the podium at the awards brunch and be handed the trophy. When you are in the company of so many distinguished birders, it's a great experience to see them smiling and clapping at your achievements.

The entire team wants to thank the Maryland Ornithological Society and particularly those people who supported us with pledges.

—Jim Brighton
Oxford, MD

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: TAKING FIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AND PARENTS) TO CAPE MAY AND THE WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING

I recently had the pleasure of serving as the designated driver for five students from Kennard Elementary School (Centerville, Queen Anne's County) as they ventured into the big-time birding world of the World Series of Birding (WSB) in Cape May, New Jersey. This was only the second year that the WSB has had an elementary school category, and these outstanding youth birders—Elizabeth Mayberry and Shannon Pignataro (3rd grade), Kelley Jewell and Michelle Long (4th grade), and Emmett Mayberry (5th grade)—set a new category record by identifying 111 species.

Our journey to the 2006 WSB began with an after-school birding program that I taught on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 until 5:00, starting in September 2005. What qualified me to teach kids about birds? Nothing, other than I had the time and the interest after I retired from my job with the Federal Government in April 2005. I had been a designated driver for six previous WSBs for my son and friends, starting out as middle schoolers in 1999. A chance encounter with Denny Pegg, a Steiner Optics representative, provided a sponsor in 2004 and 2005.

In December 2005, I approached the parents of several of the kids in my class about being on a WSB team in May. I tried to explain that I wanted to take their young'uns to Cape May to scout for birds for three days and then participate in a birding competition to see how many birds they could find in 24 hours. I imagine they thought I was slightly crazy. After all, these kids were just 8, 9, and 10 years old. Four parents agreed. In January 2006, we began meeting on Saturday mornings, as well as after an occasional early dismissal from school, in addition to the regular Wednesday and Thursday sessions. (Note: The WSB team was not associated with the school. If it had been, we would have needed to follow school rules for field trips.)

Steiner Optics provided loaner binoculars that the kids—now the Merlins—absolutely loved. On Saturday mornings that we did not go out birding, we practiced bird ID using Thayer's "Guide to Birds of North America." The kids really enjoyed the quiz section. I provided each family a copy of John Feith's CD of bird songs ("Who Cooks for Poor Sam Peabody") for the kids to study at home, along with a copy of his DVD, "Birds Birds Birds!" (I consider the format of Mr. Feith's work to be excellent for teaching younger birders.)

After four months of field work and hundreds of repetitions of "sweet sweet little more sweet" and "spring of the earth" and "beee buzzz," on Wednesday, May 10, five birders and six parents headed to Cape May to begin scouting. From previous experiences, I knew the importance of scouting.

On Thursday, we set out at 6:00 a.m. and finished for the day around 5:00 p.m. We started a little later on Friday and finished a little earlier, but it was still a long day. The parents were very supportive of the kids and the Cape May economy. They did not try to follow us around; at midday they would call and ask, "Where do you want lunch?" I

tried to pick interesting spots to picnic (like Reed's Beach), so the parents could get to see some good birds. During lunch, the kids talked non-stop about the birds they had seen. Then we would be off again.

The youngsters kept a notebook about each scouting stop, listing the birds seen or heard. Beside each bird, they wrote the vocalization of the bird. For example: "End of Stimpson's Neck Road: Yellow Warbler . . . sweet sweet little more sweet. Common Yellowthroat . . . slow witchety witchety witchety."

The kids were supposed to plan their own Cape May County route for the big day. When we sat down after supper on Friday, Kelley said, "We just want to go to all the places that we did while scouting." Good decision!

We started the Big Day at 5:00 a.m. The first bird was an American Robin and then a catbird behind the hotel. I stopped for coffee on the way to our first scouting stop. When I came back to the car, the kids were climbing back in. Kelley had seen two Great Blue Herons flying overhead, so she dragged everyone out to ID them!

The day went unbelievably well for the kids. They found most of the birds located during scouting. Their notebook was a tremendous asset. Among the day's many highlights:

- At Sunset Bridge in Belleplain Forest, the young birders were listening intently and hoping the Wood Ducks seen there during scouting would show up again. Suddenly, Michelle shouts, "Weet weet weeteo! weet weet weeteo! Hooded Warbler!" She was right. A group of adult birders approaching the bridge had a good laugh at this early-morning enthusiasm.
- Later in the day, we were driving toward the Concrete Ship. The car windows were always down to pick up any birds singing. Michelle (who has an excellent birding ear) shouts, "Zeeeeeup. Northern Parula!" The other kids readily agreed.
- My proudest moment came at the pond on the way to Reed's Beech. The kids had just found and correctly identified a Lesser Yellowlegs. A lady from New Zealand happened to be there at the same time, and she asked the kids how they knew that it was a Lesser Yellowlegs and not a Greater. Shannon bent down and drew a bird's head in the dirt and three vertical lines, one from the back of the head, one from the base of the bill, and one from the tip of the bill. She explained that the distance between the lines is about equal for the Lesser, but that the Greater has a longer bill and the distance is not the same. Wow! Ms. New Zealand was really impressed! The kids really did pay attention during that lesson.

(There and Back Again continues on page 17)

The Birder's Vest

by Rick Sussman



I Hear You!

Like many folks over 50, I find my high-frequency hearing slowly fading (especially in my left ear, a situation that puzzles my audiologist). Still, the loss is not so bad that hearing aids would be of benefit. So I was especially glad to find a device at Wal-Mart last summer that greatly helped my birding by ear, and at \$15 I bought one.

This item, which goes by various names, is an electronic listening device, basically a small parabolic microphone with attached headset. It looks like a kid's toy ray-gun with an eight-inch clear plastic bowl on one end, and a microphone sticking out of the middle of the bowl. Mine was made by National Geographic for sale at Wal-Mart, and though Wal-Mart may still sell it, I could not find it on the National Geographic store web site. The only place I could find it on line was at SkyMall (www.skymall.com, then type in #TM341A), where it is sold as the **Orbitor Electronic Listening Device** for \$59.95.

It is supposed to pick up sounds from as far away as 300 feet, but in the field the usable range is much less. When pointed at a singing bird, it does indeed bring in the sound from quite a distance, and it also enhances all the soft nuances of song that I can no longer hear. This device seems to work best on "songbird" type songs in the 4-5 KHz range; as for the lower-frequency songs of doves and owls, it doesn't seem to pick them up at all.

I've attached a small carabiner to mine so I can clip it to my belt, and I use a smaller set of "ear-pods"

instead of the oversized headphones it comes with. I carry it in the field frequently in spring and early summer (where it has caused quite a stir among local birders wanting to get their hands on one). Even for around \$60, I think this is a worthwhile gadget for those whose hearing is starting to decline.

If you have more serious hearing problems and don't mind spending a bit more (well, a good bit more! \$750, plus \$15 shipping), there is a digital birdsong-hearing device called the **Song Finder™**. To quote from the web site: "The Song Finder is . . . aimed at bird enthusiasts who . . . are unable to hear high-pitched bird songs in their natural surroundings. . . . [It] works by lowering the frequency of high-pitched songs into a range where the user has normal or near-normal hearing."

Paul Noell of Baltimore, who uses this device, offers the following review:

Song Finder™ is not a hearing aid; rather, it is a device that can selectively reduce the song of a bird to a frequency that can be heard by those who've lost the ability to hear those high buzzy riffs that are the trademark of our beloved warblers, et al. At one-half the natural pitch, one can often still recognize a species because of its characteristic pattern. For those single- to few-note calls, it can be a challenge, as well as songs that are more jumbled. The Prairie Warbler is a snap. Curiously, the robin can confuse, and a jay sounds like a crow. Eventually, with application and the help of the "hearing" clan, one can learn the calls and songs. Characteristic chip notes can be frustrating. The maker claims one can determine distance as well as direction. The mikes can only "reach out" a relatively short distance; good birders hear much farther out and can also pick up nearby little chips the mikes cannot. Still, I feel I get 75%-95% of the birds on a typical walk—which ain't hay!

Clicking on Sound Samples on the Sound Finder web-site (www.nselec.com), I was presented with thumbnails of 16 bird species.

Clicking on any one produced a recording of the bird's song at a natural frequency, followed by one at half the frequency, and then a third of the frequency, and so on. I could hear all of them at half frequency and was sold!

The device has two components, a headset that fits around the back of the head and a control box (which connects to the headset) that can be hung on a belt or slipped in a pocket. One can select 1/2, 1/3 or 1/4 of the frequency picked up by the small mikes mounted on each earphone. Once the user sets an internal balance control, it is possible to hear directionally. Volume control can be adjusted to a comfortable level. Song Finder uses four AA batteries, which last about 20 hours with alkaline, longer with NiMh. That's about five days at four hours per day. With an extra set of batteries, one shouldn't be caught short. I use rechargeable NiMh and a four-battery recharger, so the initial higher cost is reduced over time.

Another happy user, **Bob Elvander** in Laurel, MD, e-mails:

I have typical male hearing loss, the so-called ski-slope. I hear normally to around 2 KHz, and then my loss slopes strongly down to about 70 dB . . . out to higher frequencies. I have tried many types of hearing aids, and the best that can be done is to hear reasonably well to about 4 KHz, and if things are close, to 5 KHz. But in normal natural settings, things are NOT too close.

I purchased a Song Finder about a year ago, and I was immediately immersed in sounds I haven't heard since I was a young man. Examples are most warbler songs, many sparrow songs, kinglets, etc. . . . I use it almost all the time.

ISO

PUBLICITY COORDINATOR

If you're a good writer (journalism background a plus), MOS needs your skills. You'll create articles and news releases that aim to attract members and raise awareness of conservation issues, and you'll help respond to bird-related inquiries from reporters. We want MOS to be recognized as the go-to people for Maryland birds and birding.

DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

Do you have fundraising experience, enthusiasm, creativity? You can make a big difference to the future of MOS. There are many generous donors who would be happy to support organizations like ours, but we need to make it easier for them to give. Your efforts will ensure that we have the resources to fulfill our mission.

THE HOLY ORDER OF LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES: PRONATURA WINS AGAIN

The Eagle Optics/Holy Order of Loggerhead Shrikes—**Gordon Gover, John Hubbell**, and captain **Andy Rabin**, all current or former members of the Montgomery Bird Club—tallied 134 species, to take second place in the Cape May Island division. (Team founder **Don Simonson** was grounded by a nagging knee injury.) Thanks to the support of several MOS members, the team was able to raise almost \$1,500 in pledges for Pronatura Veracruz.

Midnight found the Shrikes poised at the edge of a salt marsh. Immediately a Clapper Rail called. This was followed by the world's most persistent Chuck-will's-widow and a Black-crowned Night-Heron—a propitious start, to say the least. We had planned to make Higbee Beach the cornerstone of our landbirding, but it quickly became apparent that this was not a great day for finding migrant songbirds at Higbee. With rain threatening, we hit the jetties, where great looks at Surf Scoter and White-winged Scoter were highlights of an amazing seabird show.

As the day moved along, we had our hits and misses, though overall it seemed like luck was on our side. A Canada Warbler at Higbee Beach, for example, was a surprising find. We closed the daylight hours in the South Cape May Meadows, where a pair of Wilson's Snipe became the 134th entry on the list. But the excitement was not over! An American Woodcock put an exclamation point to the day by buzzing us so close we could feel the wingbeats and landing literally at our feet!

Our tally of 134 species ended up being only four species behind this year's winner of the Cape May Island Cup. We're already looking forward to next year, when we hope we can finish in first place for the first time in what will be the team's eighth year of competition.

(More info about the team is available at <http://www.holyshrikes.com>)

—Andy Rabin

Yours for the asking:

A CD-ROM, "**Landscapes, Birds and People: A Biodiversity Primer**," is available free to teachers from Wayne Bell (wbell2@washcoll.edu). For more information, see <http://bird.washcoll.edu/birds.html>.

A CD of night bird sounds (eg, owls, nightjars), along with "How-to" notes, is available from Walter Ellison (rossgull@baybroadband.net) for use in nocturnal field work.

2007 MOS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BY TOM STRIKWERDA

The Maryland Ornithological Society is now accepting applications from Maryland teachers, park rangers, and youth leaders for scholarships to attend week-long summer ecology and ornithology workshops. In 2006, scholarship recipients attended workshops at Audubon camps in Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and the 2007 workshop selection is expected to be similar. Awards, each valued at about \$1,000, cover tuition, room, and board for an intensive six days of field study and instruction in ecology, ornithology, conservation, or natural history. Travel expenses to and from the workshops are the responsibility of the recipient. Each year MOS awards approximately 10 scholarships.

Please note that specific dates and program information from the camps often are not available until December or January. However, information about the 2006 choices, many of which repeat, can serve as a guide and is available on the MOS website (www.mdbirds.org). Websites of the Audubon organizations offering the workshops also can provide additional information; however, please note that not all workshops listed by those organizations are approved for the MOS Scholarship program. Choices for 2007 will be posted on the MOS website as they become available.

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must work with young people in Maryland. Typical applicants are teachers, camp counselors, park rangers, students, and others who intend to make nature education a part of their careers. Applicants do not need to be members of MOS, but they must be endorsed by a chapter or a member of MOS. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older. Each candidate must submit the following:

- A written statement in the form of a letter, no more than two pages in length, showing how the Audubon experience will be used to develop in young people an appreciation of our natural heritage and a sense of responsibility for the care and quality of our natural resources and environment.
- Two letters of recommendation from individuals who know of the candidate's interests, activities, abilities, and potential. *One of these letters must be from either a member of MOS or a chapter of MOS.* Each MOS chapter has a scholarship representative to assist potential applicants with recommendations. Please contact your local chapter president for the representative or contact the Scholarship Committee Chair (see below) for a person to contact in your area. It is extremely helpful if the letters of recommendation cite specific activities, accomplishments, or projects in which the applicant was involved, in addition to personal qualities.
- A current resume.

Applications for the 2007 workshops are due by January 31, 2007. The Scholarship Committee evaluates candidates during February, and winners are notified in early March.

Please direct questions and submit applications to Tom Strikwerda, Chair of the MOS Scholarship Committee, 9806 Culver Ct, Kensington, MD 20895, telephone: 301-942-2841, e-mail: tom.strikwerda@verizon.net. All chapter presidents and representatives are urged to disseminate this information as widely as possible to all educators and youth leaders in the state. A broad base of applicants is needed to ensure wide participation and quality candidates.



Janet Millenson's soaring Turkey Vulture won the pin design contest in 2006.

PIN CONTEST 2007

Attention all MOS Artists!! You are invited to enter the 2007 MOS Conference Pin Design Contest. The deadline is January 15, 2007. The basic rules are simple: Entrants must be a member of MOS, and the design must contain a bird appropriate for the conference site (Salisbury) and the phrases "MOS" and "2007." On the back of each entry, the artist must put name, address, and chapter affiliation and identify the species represented. The pin can be any shape. Send entries to John Malcolm, 10205 Kindly Court, Montgomery Village, MD 20886. To see all the rules and more tips about designing pins for the contest, visit the MOS website or contact John Malcolm at 301-977-5788 or smudgie@comcast.net.

There and Back Again *(continued from page 13)*

- We pulled into the spot by the Cape May Zoo to see the Snow Goose that had taken up residence there, an easy find during scouting. There in front of the car is a dad fishing with two of his kids and, horror of horrors, lots of people are milling around on the other side of the pond waiting for a wedding to begin. The kids were not kind in voicing their displeasure: "Why are they getting married today? Why are these kids fishing here? Where is the Snow Goose!?" Of course, I had to agree with them, because the Snow Goose was hiding. At least the Red-headed Woodpecker was there at the next stop.
- As we got the bridge leading to Nummy's Island around 3:30 p.m., the kids were getting tired. We stopped at our scouting point, where they had previously found two American Oystercatchers and two Black Skimmers. There on the sandbar were 28 Black Skimmers, several oystercatchers, and other shorebirds. The sight of that many skimmers really got them excited again.
- Towards the end of the day, we pulled up to the spot at Sunset Lake where we had found a Common Loon during scouting. Instead, we found two jet skiers zooming around. The kids were ticked! They moaned and groaned and complained. I told them to get out and look. They were not out of the car but 10 seconds when they spotted the loon hugging the shore on the far side of the lake. Talk about excited!
- We finished the day around 8:30 p.m. at the Meadows, looking for woodcock. As soon as I got out of the car, I could hear the woodcocks "peenting." As the kids climbed out, each one in turn exclaimed, "I hear them! I hear them!"

We then headed to the finish line. Most of the eight other elementary school teams had checked in, and the winning total so far was 72 species. After filling in their check-in sheet, the Merlins started counting: 114 birds. . . 113 birds. . . 98 birds; each kid was getting a different number. Finally they agreed on 111 species.

The kids and the parents were floating on air on Sunday morning at the Awards Brunch, as this outstanding group of youth birders accepted their first-place plaque. Compared to most of the adult birders, who were sucking down the coffee, the kids were full of energy.

Before we headed to Cape May, I had no idea how the youngsters would hold up to 3½ days of nearly continuous birding. Their birding skills increased by 1000% during the scouting and the competition. On Saturday, they birded from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., with just short breaks for lunch and dinner. Their performance reinforced my conviction that young people are capable of amazing feats if you believe in them and they believe in themselves. Next year may bring only 99 species, but I know they will be shooting for 125.

—Jim Wilson
Queen Anne's County

REMEMBERING LUTHER GOLDMAN

A few months after Luther Goldman died in 2005 at the age of 94, several of his friends and admirers formed an ad hoc group with the intention of honoring his lifelong accomplishments, dedication to conservation, and love of birds. After considering a number of possible ways to memorialize Luther, we agreed that our best idea would be to develop a birding trail on public lands in his name. The tentative plan, which has been discussed with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, is to designate a portion of existing trails of the Commission's Anacostia River Trail System as the "Luther Goldman Memorial Birding Trail." Luther frequently hiked these trails and loved to bird them; indeed, he added many new species to the area list.

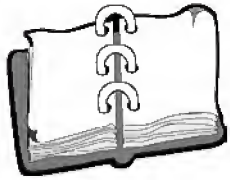
The trail route is not yet designated and will require M-NCPPC concurrence and approval, but the plan is to have the trail loop around Lake Artemesia and possibly extend up and/or down the Anacostia Trails System, perhaps down to Bladensburg at the Historic Waterfront Park. The trail would have signs, a self-guided booklet, a birding checklist, and who knows—perhaps podcasts or some other form of taped, narrated, self-guided walk. We envision a trail that could become part of a larger Anacostia River Birding Trail spanning a significant portion of the river and its tributaries, and which could be linked as a larger Anacostia Trail network is connected across jurisdictions.

Several groups have offered their support, including the Montgomery Bird Club, the Patuxent Bird Club, the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, the Washington Field Biologists Club, and others. However, we will need to fund the entrance signs and other signage, including interpretive and educational signs along the trail, and a birding site-guide, and there may be other incidental expenses. Contributions to help make the trail a reality will be welcome. We also hope that there will be a number of volunteer leaders who step forward to lead birding hikes along the trail when it is completed.

At present, the group is formally requesting consideration by the M-NCPPC. The project will require approval by the Prince George's Co Planning Board, possibly in September, so at some point public support for the project will be needed. Volunteers are identifying the route, compiling a bird checklist, and planning educational and interpretive content for a booklet and signs.

Want to help? MOS members who wish to contribute can send their donations or pledges to Montgomery Bird Club President Helen Patton, 429 Hamilton Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20901. To volunteer to help in the initial stages of this project, you can contact Maureen Blades at mblades@comcast.net, or me, at dolesh@erols.com (202-887-0290 day).

—Rich Dolesh
Director of Public Policy
National Recreation and Park Association



MOS Calendar

September-October 2006

Saturday, September 2

H **Howard.** Butterflies through Binoculars. 2-3 hrs. 9:30 AM, Centennial Lake. Expert instruction on butterfly identification. Learn about host and nectar plants for different species. Very easy walking. Close-focus binoculars helpful. Facilities available. Meet at west end parking lot. Leader: Dick Smith, 410-997-7439.

H **Baltimore.** Cromwell Valley Park. Meet 8 AM at Willow Grove Farm parking lot. Diverse habitat includes stream, woods, and fields. Expect a variety of resident and migrant birds. From I-695 take Exit 29A/Cromwell Bridge Rd and turn north (away from the city) onto Cromwell Bridge Rd. At 1.3 miles, turn left at the Sherwood Farm entrance. Follow entrance road, then turn right at the sign to the Willow Grove Farm parking lot. A new access road connects the two sides of the park (Sherwood Farm and Willow Grove Farm), but ongoing construction keeps changing which entrance to use. If the access road is closed, return to Cromwell Bridge Rd and go left to the next entrance and try there. Cross stream to lot on left. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

H **Patuxent.** Fran Uhler Natural Area. 7:30 AM. Meet at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required.

Sunday, September 3

H **Talbot.** Tilghman Island. Warblers, flycatchers, gulls, terns, and more. Depart 7 AM from St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

H Indicates Field Trip

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Arboretum Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Mansion's front porch for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H **Baltimore.** Butterflies of Soldiers Delight. 2 hrs. Meet 1 PM at Soldiers Delight Visitor/Nature Center. Join butterfly expert Dick Smith at this globally rare ecosystem. Dick will begin the afternoon with a 20-minute slide show. After that, a trip to the fields of Soldiers Delight will provide an opportunity to see these beautiful insects up close and personal. Cancelled if raining. Call or e-mail to confirm date. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

H **Harford.** Harford Glen. Meet 7 AM at upper lot in the pine grove. Join co-leaders Lynn Davis and Dave Larkin on a trip through the marshes, fields, and forests of this perennial club favorite. Always a productive location, the Glen reliably produces a good variety of passerines and shorebirds. Contact Lynn at 410-569-0504 for more info.

H **Montgomery.** Western Montgomery Shorebirds. Two-thirds day. Meet 7:30 AM at Violette's Lock parking lot, end of Violette's Lock Rd. Start with a scan of the river at Violette's Lock, then drive north along River Rd, stopping at polo grounds, Sycamore Landing Rd, and Patton Turf Farm. Buff-breasted Sandpiper and American Golden-Plover a possibility. Scopes recommended but not required. Bring lunch. Limit: 10. Reservations

required. Leader: Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 or apmartin2@comcast.net.

Tuesday, September 5

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland (Robert E. Lee Park). 8:30 AM. First in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of fall migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Expect songbirds, herons, shorebirds, and raptors. From Baltimore Beltway north of the city, take exit 23 south/I-83 Jones Falls Expy. Exit at North Ave and proceed east (left), get in left lane, go to traffic light at Falls Rd. Turn left (north) on Falls Rd. Just after Lake Ave traffic light, turn right (east) at south end of Falls Rd bridge, follow tight curve to right, go 5 miles through streamside woods to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattonyp@juno.com.

MEETING. Baltimore. Don Wilson will present "Hunting with a Camera: Birds of Florida and Maryland." Don offers a photographic portrait of the birds of these two eastern states. 7:30 PM at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave.

Wednesday, September 6

H **Baltimore.** Morning walks at Ft. McHenry. Meet 8 AM at Visitor Center. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Folding chair and scope useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc.). From Baltimore Beltway southwest of the city, take exit 11/I-95 north towards the city. Take exit 55/Hanover St. Turn east (right) on McComas St and left (north) on Key Hwy; take first left, Lawrence St, then left onto Fort Ave; continue through gateway into the park. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

H **Baltimore.** Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog, etc. See above listing for directions. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. **Carroll.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM. Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Karen Mobley, karenm657@earthlink.net.

Thursday, September 7

H Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. One-third day. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area 18 (on Ridge Rd, half-mile below Nature Center). Migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Reservations required. Call leader if unsure of directions. Leader: Rob Hilton, 301-587-6136.

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Stauffer Miller* will report on "The Birds of Cape Cod." 7 PM C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick. If you would like to join Stauffer and Ellie for dinner before the meeting, call Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

Friday-Sunday, September 8-10

H Baltimore. Chimney Swift Count. 7:15 PM to dusk. Count swifts as they descend into chimneys in various buildings throughout Baltimore City and Baltimore Co. Check with Joan Cwi for assignment to a site. Count one, two, or three nights. Leaders: Joan Cwi, cwij@s Battelle.org and Carol Schreter, 410-664-5151.

Saturday, September 9

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Half day. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Migrant warblers and other woodland edge birds. Limit: 8. Call leader for reservations and directions. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Howard. Hugg-Thomas WMA. Half day. Meet 8 AM at gravel lot. These extensive fields and woodlands provide habitat for many species of migrants. Blue Grosbeaks nest along the edges and the family groups should be around. Both turkeys and owls have been seen here. Plan for moderate walking and possible muddy trails. No facilities. Leader: Tom Miller, 410-795-7005.

ANNUAL FALL POTLUCK PICNIC. **Anne Arundel.** 4 PM at Marilyn Taylor's. For directions and info, contact Marilyn, 410-923-0069.

H Baltimore. Fall Warblers at Turkey Point. Half day. Meet 6 AM at Cromwell Bridge Rd P&R (Baltimore Beltway exit 29), or join us by 7:30 AM at the Turkey Point parking lot. Philadelphia Vireo, Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers possible. If the songbirds disappoint, there are always hawks! Moderate walking. Bring water and snacks. Leaders: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com, and Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Frederick. Hart-Miller Island. Gene Scarpula will lead us on a 7-8 mile trek around Hart-Miller Island to look for migrating shorebirds. Be sure to bring lunch, plenty of water, hat, sunscreen, and bug spray. Mike Welch is coordinating the trip and space is limited. To make reservations, contact Mike, 301-874-5828.

ANNUAL PICNIC. **Harford.** Enjoy birding, socializing, and the famous cooking of Tom Congersky and Randy Robertson. Starts at 2 PM. Cost \$12. Contact Eileen Nack, 410-272-7017 or jmnack@comcast.net, to make reservations.

Sunday, September 10

H Talbot. Bombay Hook NWR and Delaware Coastal Areas. Depart 6:30 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton or 7 AM from LL Bean parking area, Prime Outlets, Queenstown. Migrating shorebirds and wading species. Lunch on the road. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742.

H Howard. Beginners' Bird Walk at The Howard Conservancy. 2 hrs. Meet 8 AM at main parking lot. Easy walking through fields and meadows. Learn tips on bird identification and advice with binocular and field guide selection and use.

Combination of streams, woodland, and fields should provide a wide variety of species. Facilities available. Leader: Robin Todd, 410-313-8154 (eve) or 410-747-4500 (day).

H Anne Arundel. Terrapin Park/Cross Island Bike Trail, Queen Anne's Co. Half day. Meet 7:30 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Migrating landbirds, some shorebirds, waterfowl, and butterflies. Bring your bike and ride along the Cross Island Bike Trail to Kent Narrows and back again, or bird in Terrapin Park. For those who wish, we will be going to Holly's for lunch. Leader: Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, September 12

H Howard. Lake Elkhorn. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at Broken Land Pkwy parking lot. Easy walk along the lake and to Forbay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers are generally in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks are also possible. No facilities. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "Of Rails and Rice: The Delicate Ecology of Wild Rice Marshes on the Patuxent River," *Greg Kearns*, M-NCPPC Park Naturalist, Patuxent River Park. For additional info, call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744.

MEETING. **Allegany.** Program TBA. 7 PM. Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Located across the street from the Board of Ed Bldg.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 19)

MEETING. Kent. Program TBA. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Wednesday, September 13

H Baltimore. Greenmount Cemetery. Meet 9:30 AM. The first of two cemetery walks to investigate bird life in Baltimore City. These pockets of green space are relatively undisturbed and unexplored. From I-83, take North Ave exit. At light, turn left (east) onto North Ave and go 10 blocks. Turn right on Greenmount Ave and go 4 short blocks. At Oliver St, turn left into main gate and park. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

H Baltimore. Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. Meet 6 PM at main gate. See Sept 6 "Morning Walks" listing for directions. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Thursday, September 14

MEETING. Talbot. *Margaret Carter*, Master Gardener and Adkins Arboretum docent, will present "Using Native Plants in the Landscape." A great talk about how important native plants are to native wildlife. 7 PM upstairs at the Easton Welcome Center, 11 South Harrison St, Easton.

MEETING. Howard. "Birdsong and Coffee: A Wake-up Call," by *Patty Reed* and *Paul Baicich*. This documentary film, with discussion to follow, will detail the natural connections that exist among coffee communities, coffee drinkers, biodiversity, and birds. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

H Montgomery. Triadelphia Area. Half day. A morning of woodland birding along the Patuxent River watershed with an excellent chance for early fall migrants. Meet 7:15 AM at Ashton Village Center (near 7-11), intersection of Rtes 108 and

650. Reservations required. Leader: Hugh Mahanes, 301-564-0780 or hembuteo@comcast.net.

H Washington. Jug Bay Wetlands. Contact Ann Mitchell, 240-420-0808, for details.

Saturday, September 16

H FALL COUNT. Howard. For more info, contact Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H FALL COUNT. Anne Arundel. Contact: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H FALL COUNT. Baltimore. We will tally all birds seen within the city and county during this calendar day. Birders of all levels of experience are welcome and urged to participate. To avoid duplication of counting, contact compiler Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net, for assignment.

H FALL COUNT. Caroline. If you would like to participate, please contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or firefly5845@hotmail.com.

H FALL COUNT. Washington. Compiler: Doris Berger, 301-739-8907.

H FALL COUNT. Frederick. Mike Welch will coordinate our eighth countywide fall census. Call Mike, 301-874-5828 to be placed with a team or assigned a territory.

H FALL COUNT. Allegany. Tentative date. Contact Chuck Hager, 301-689-5344, to confirm date and area assignment. Tally to be held 7 PM at Ray Kiddy's house (13103 Quarry Ridge Rd). Call Ray, 301-729-1972, for directions. Bring a covered dish to share with the other participants.

H Baltimore. Morning walk at Ft. McHenry. See Sept 6 listing. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Patuxent. Governor Bridge Park. 7:30 AM. Meet at the parking lot for the park, located on Governor Bridge Rd approximately 1 mile east

of MD 301. Reservations not required.

Sunday, September 17

H Talbot. Trappe Landing Native Sanctuary. Waterfowl and field birds. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002 or wbell2@washcoll.edu.

H Anne Arundel. Hawk Mountain, PA. All-day trip to this famous hawkwatching site. Meet 5 AM at Severna Park P&R. Bring lunch. Breakfast on the way. Leader: Larry Zoller, 410-987-9354.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at Dusk in Hampden. Join the BBC Swift Watch Team for "Swift Night Out" as Chimney Swifts pour into the Bookbindery and/or the Mill Center chimneys. Cancelled if raining. Meet 7 PM. Directions: From Baltimore Beltway north of the city, take exit 23/I-83 Jones Falls Expy south to Cold Spring Ln exit. Go east (left) 1/4 mile to light at Falls Rd. Turn right (south) onto Falls Rd and go 1.2 miles. At 36th St, follow left lane. At stop sign, turn left and go one short block uphill. Take first right onto Falls Cliff Rd. Follow arrow leftward around the curve to dead end. Right onto Elm St, first left onto Mill St, first left into Mill Center parking lot. Co-leaders: Carol Schreter, 410-664-5151, and Joan Cwi, cwijs@battelle.org.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Harford. Winters Run Rd, SW Harford County. True to its name, this road meanders along the cool clear waters of Winters Run. Great time to catch migrant songbirds. Meet 7 AM at the MD 24 P&R, .5 mi south of I-95. Contact Lynn Davis or Dave Larkin at 410-569-0504 for further info.

H Indicates Field Trip

*Maryland birders never
know what exciting variety
will show up next.
Bob Mumford photographed
the Black-bellied Whistling
Duck when it winged it's way
through Gaithersburg in June.
See "Birds of Note" on page 4
for the rest of the story . . .*



Montgomery. Presidents' Walk at Seneca. Half day. Participation of all former Chapter Presidents is encouraged and everyone is welcome. Bring lunch for a post-walk picnic. Meet 7:30 AM at parking lot at end of Riley's Lock Rd off River Rd. Honorary Leaders: Current and former presidents. Contact: Helen Patton, 301-588-5418.

Tuesday, September 19

Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

Wednesday, September 20

MEETING. Montgomery. *Dave Brinker*, MD DNR, will present "Biodiversity in Maryland: What Makes the Free State Naturally Great!" Mention "biodiversity" and most people think of far-away tropical places. But the Free State is often referred to as America in miniature. There were, and still are, charismatic megafauna in Maryland. There are also some extremely interesting but much less well known inhabitants. 7:30 PM, Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Baltimore. Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. Meet 6 PM at main gate. See Sept 6 "Morning Walks" listing for directions. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Thursday, September 21

MEETING. Caroline. "Birding Basics for the Novice and Those Needing a Refresher." Presenter: TBA. 7:30 PM at Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. Contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or firefly5845@hotmail.com, for more info.

Saturday, September 23

Howard. Meadowbrook Park. Full day. Meet 9:30 AM at P&R lot near bridge. Inaugurate this new Howard Co hawkwatching site. Bring a chair and sustenance for however long you plan to stay. Drop by for an hour or stay for the entire day. Nearby ponds and field edges might turn up some non-hawk species. Learn tips and techniques on separating hawks in flight. Facilities available. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643.

Anne Arundel. Patuxent River Park Boat Trip, PG Co. Meet 6 AM at Parole P&R. Greg Kearns will lead this half-day trip for waterbirds, landbirds, maybe an owl, and Sora. \$6 fee for boat trip. Limit:16. For reservations and info, contact Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

Harford. Ft. Smallwood Hawkwatch. Join leader Spike Updegrove for a visit to this well

known Anne Arundel Co park and prime site on the East Coast for hawk migration. Trip-goers can expect to see large numbers of Broad-winged, Sharp-shinned, and Cooper's Hawks. Meet 8 AM at MD 152 and I-95 P&R. Contact Spike at 410-838-1783 for more info.

Baltimore. Hart-Miller Island. Meet 6:45 AM at boat dock. Eight-mile, 10-hr hike on level ground under open sky with no shelter or shade. One rest stop (bathrooms) halfway around the trek. Wear a hat and long pants. Carry scope, drinks, lunch, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Maryland's best shorebird hotspot by far. Possible rare gulls, Merlins, and Peregrine Falcons. Reservations are required. For reservations, directions, and info, contact Gene Scarpulla, 410-388-0852 or ejscarp@comcast.net, by preceding Thurs evening.

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sept 2 for details. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

Carroll. Morgan Run NA. Half day. Meet 8 AM. Contact leader Bill Ellis, 443-402-9033, for meeting place and directions.

Frederick. Gambrill SP. Barbara Gearhart will lead us on a quest for fall migrants. Meet 8 AM at Gambrill SP. For more info, contact Barbara, 301-473-9889.

Patuxent. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Meet at 7:30 at the Bowie P&R for this all-day shorebird trip. For additional info, contact Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744.

Sunday, September 24

Talbot. Wades Point Inn for fall residents of fields, woodlands, and water. No Breakfast. Depart 7 AM from St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169 or lroslund@bluecrab.org.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 19)

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Caroline. Bird-banding Observation in Chestertown. Leader: Jim Gruber, Bander. Meet 7:45 AM at Roses parking lot in Denton to carpool. Great for kids. Adults welcome, too. For more info, contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or firefly5845@hotmail.com.

H Montgomery. Violette's Lock to Pennyfield Lock Bird Stalk. Meet 7 AM at Violette's Lock parking lot, end of Violette's Lock Rd. We'll carpool to Pennyfield and walk up to Violette's. This trip should net an interesting mix of late warblers, landbird migrants, and probably a few first-show winter visitors, as all the while we scan the skies and river for raptors and waterbirds. Leader: Howard Youth, 301-915-0071 or howard.youth@starpower.net.

Monday, September 25

MEETING. **Tri-County.** Kate Patton, Exec Director of Lower Shore Land Trust, will describe "Land Protection Options Available for Property Owners." 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Room, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, September 26

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Shirley Geddes, 410-377-6583.

MEETING. **Washington.** Bob and Marcia Balestri will present "Birding Australia and New Zealand." 7:30 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for add'l info.

Wednesday, September 27

H Howard. David Force Park. 2 hrs. Meet 8 AM at the sign on Pebble Beach Dr. Easy walk through wooded trails and fields. Streams and pond provide habitat for numerous bird species. No facilities. Leader: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057.

Friday, September 29

H Patuxent. Jug Bay boat trip. 7:30 AM. Join this fall boat trip to look for migrants, shorebirds, and early waterfowl; Soras are a possibility in the park's wild rice marshes. Limit 15, \$5 fee. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for additional information.

Saturday, September 30

H Talbot. Chincoteague, VA. Targeting godwits, Sandwich Terns, and White-rumped Sandpipers. Depart 6:30 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132.

H Howard and Carroll. Dickey Farm. Joint trip. Half day. Meet 7:30 AM at Rte 32/I-70 P&R. Moderate walking through the woodlands and field edges of this private farm. A couple of ponds will provide a chance for waterbirds. Great habitat for warblers, sparrows, and vireos. No facilities. Leaders: Dave and Maureen Harvey, 410-795-3117.

H Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch Park, Rockville. Half day. Meet 8 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents. Reservations required. Limit: 12. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Half day. Meet 8 AM. Warblers, thrushes, possible shorebirds, and other delights. See Sept 5 entry for directions. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

H Harford. Harmony Church Rd, eastern Harford County. Meet 7:30 AM. Join newlywed Russ Kovach (sorry ladies!) for a leisurely stroll along this quiet and scenic county road. The road meanders within earshot of Deer Creek, a magnet for some favorite southbound songbirds. Meet at the intersection of MD 136 and Harmony Church Rd. Contact Russ, 443-386-4787, for more info.

H Tri-County. Assateague Island. Half day. Meet 7:30 AM at Asbury Methodist Church, east parking lot (Wesley Dr side), Camden Ave, Salisbury. Visit Assateague SP and National Seashore for coastal migrants, including falcons, shorebirds, warblers, and sparrows. Bring lunch. Leader TBA.

H Frederick. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Helen Horrocks will lead us on a trip to this birdy site in Montgomery Co. Waterproof boots are a good idea. Meet 7:30 AM at Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70.

Sunday, October 1

H Talbot. North Dorchester County. A new spot for us! Continental breakfast at Shirley's to follow walk. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Shirley Bailey, 443-249-0153 or sjbbirds@dmv.com.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Half day. Migrant sparrows, warblers, and other woodland edge birds. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limit: 8. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

Tuesday, October 3

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Dot Gustafson, 410-584-9509 or dotsg@bcpl.net.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Gwen Brewer and George Jett will present "Birds and Bats in the Brazilian Amazon." Gwen and George discuss the biodiversity of western Brazil with photos from a 12-day, 500-mile boat trip on the Amazon River, during which they identified more than 200 species of birds and 28 species of bats. 7:30 PM at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave.

Tuesday-Wednesday, October 3-4

H Montgomery. Chincoteague NWR, VA. Meet at Visitor Center on refuge at 7 AM. Looking for late migrants, raptors, terns, gulls, shorebirds, etc. Bring snacks, beverages, sunscreen, bug spray, and lunch for the first day (we will eat on the refuge). Some moderate walking on trails and beach, and cycling on Wednesday. Please let leader know ahead of time if you can bring your own bike or need to rent one at Chincoteague. Limit: 15. For reservations, hotels, and more details, contact Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglenfarm.com.

Wednesday, October 4

H Baltimore. Morning Walk at Ft. McHenry. See Sept 6 listing. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM. Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Karen Mobley, karenm657@earthlink.net.

Thursday, October 5

MEETING. **Frederick.** In conjunction with a display of the late Gary Smyles's photographs at the library, we will be featuring *Wil Hershberger*, speaking on the "50 Common Birds of Frederick County." 7 PM. C. Burr Artz Library. Frederick. Info: Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

Friday, October 6

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** Greg Kearns, biologist and naturalist at Patuxent River Park, has spent over 16 years researching and banding rails at Jug Bay. He will present "Of Rice and Rails: A Report on Rail Populations at Jug Bay and the Importance of Wild Rice." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

Saturday, October 7

H Howard. Lincoln's Sparrow Search/Sparrows 101. Joint trip with Anne Arundel. Half day. Meet 7:45 AM at Meadowbrook P&R. Moderate walking along field edges

and mown grassy paths. Learn the basics of sparrow identification, with emphasis on Lincoln's Sparrow. Behavior, habitats, and vocalizations of sparrows will be covered in depth. Facilities available. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H Anne Arundel. Sparrow Trip. Combined trip with Howard County. Bonnie Ott will lead this half-day trip to learn about and look for Lincoln's and other sparrows. Meet 7 AM at the Parole P&R. For info contact Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H Caroline. Bird Walk cosponsored with Tuckahoe SP. Jessica Conley, Park Services Associate, will be leading this bird walk for children. Adults are invited, as well. She will have a few extra binoculars if you don't have any. Meet 8 AM at the Woods Trail parking lot near the lake. Contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or firefly5845@hotmail.com, for more info.

H Harford. Owl Prowl. Eastern Screech, Barred, and Great Horned Owls possible. Bring binoculars and small flashlight. Meet at C. Milton Wright H.S. parking lot at 5:30 PM. Leaders: Dave Ziolkowski and Russ Kovach. Call 443-299-8453 for more details.

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Everyone welcome, especially new birders. Late warblers and vireos, early sparrows, and some raptors possible. For reservations, time, and place to meet, call leader, Gemma Radko, 301-607-4374.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler Natural Area. 7:30 AM. See Sept 2 listing.

Sunday, October 8

BIG SIT. **Anne Arundel.** Kinder Farm Park. Come anytime from dawn to dusk to take part in this nationwide event. Call Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674, for directions and more info.

BIG SIT. **Montgomery.** Join the Sitting Ducks at Black Hill RP, starting at dawn and continuing until ? Come for the day or just a few hours. For directions and info, contact Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

BIG SIT. **Patuxent.** Schoolhouse Pond. Sunrise to sunset. Join the Marlboro Magpies for the first-ever Big Sit at the observation platform at the rear of the pond. This nationwide event combines competitive birding with complete inactivity. Come for all day or just a couple of hours, and see what flies by or lands on the pond. For more information, contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Talbot. Black Walnut Point on Tilghman Island for hawkwatching. No breakfast. Bring lunch and a lawn chair. Depart 9 AM from St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank. Leader: Andrew Bullen, 410-763-8156.

H Howard. West Friendship Park. Meet 8 AM at MD 32 and Old Frederick Rd shopping center. Moderate walking through the fields of this former dairy farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Wetland area can be soggy. Small pond may hold ducks. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. No facilities. Leader: Lisa Colangelo, 410-489-4287.

Monday, October 9

H Baltimore. Hart-Miller Island. Meet 8 AM. Join us for a half-day bus trip around Hart-Miller. Shorebirds plus possible rare gulls, Merlins, and Peregrine Falcons. Scopes helpful. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, drinks, and snacks. For reservations (required), directions, and info, contact Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 23)**Tuesday, October 10**

Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Matilda Weiss, 410-337-2732

Howard. Bon Secours Spiritual Center. 2 hrs. Meet 8:30 AM at visitor parking lot. Easy walking through the grounds of this spiritual retreat. Woods, fields, and hedgerows provide opportunities for a variety of birds. Facilities available. Leader: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057.

MEETING. Allegany. Program TBA. 7 PM. Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Located across the street from the Board of Ed Bldg.

MEETING. Kent. Program TBA. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

MEETING. Patuxent. "Northern Saw-whet Owl Migration" by *Dave Brinker*, MD DNR. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex. For more information, call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744.

Wednesday, October 11

Washington. Hawkwatching at Washington Monument SP. Meet 9 AM at the monument. Contact Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, for details.

Thursday, October 12

MEETING. **Talbot.** *Dana Limpert*, MD DNR, will present "Bat Zen: Bats in Maryland." Learn about conservation issues facing bats. 7 PM upstairs at the Easton Welcome Center, 11 South Harrison St, Easton.

MEETING. **Howard.** "Maryland's Next Species," by *Phil Davis*. The MD/DC Records Committee has compiled predictions as to what new species might show up in our state next. Tips on key field marks and where and when to look for these unexpected birds will be presented. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at

Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Friday-Sunday, October 13-15

Anne Arundel. Kiptopeke SP and Fisherman Island NWR, VA. Meet 8 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Migrant landbirds, raptors, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Bird and raptor banding will be taking place at Kiptopeke. Contact the coordinator by Oct 1 if you want to participate: Stephen Hult, 410-956-3392.

Saturday, October 14

Allegany. Town Hill. Tentative. Join Ray Kiddy to watch for migrating hawks at a time of year when there is good hawk diversity. Meet 7:30 AM at the Mason's Barn P&R, off I-68, exit 46. Bring lunch and a drink. Call Ray, 301-729-1972, to confirm date.

Frederick. Lilypons. Good for beginners. Possible American Bittern, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and other fall migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Lilypons bridge. Leader: Barbara Gearhart, 301-473-9889.

Sunday, October 15

Talbot. "Harleigh," Chip and Sally Akridge's estate on Oxford Rd. Breakfast hosts: Bernie and Nancy Burns. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132.

Howard. Western RP. Meet 7:30 AM at lot near pond off Carr's Mill Rd. Explore this newly developed county park. Some paved roads will provide moderate walking, but be prepared to head onto grassy paths or wade into field edge areas in search of sparrows! Woodlands may have some warblers. Hawkwatching will be a bonus. Facilities available. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Harford. Susquehanna SP. Meet 8 AM at the Rock Run Mill. A perennial favorite of the club, this trip sends off the last of the fall

migrants and welcomes the arrival of some cold-weather residents. Join Les Eastman to see thousands of Tree Swallows amassed over the river on their southbound journey, and search the forest for Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, Blue-headed Vireo, Cape May Warbler, creepers, and kinglets. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 for more info.

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Patuxent. Prince George's Co Parks. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bowie P&R. Visit several county parks along the Patuxent River in search of migrant sparrows and early waterfowl. Stops may include Merkle WMA, Aquasco Farms, and Miltown Landing. For additional information, contact Fred Fallon at 301-249-1518.

Tuesday, October 17

Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

Wednesday, October 18

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Maryland's Next New Species." Speaker: *Phil Davis*, Secretary, MD/DC Records Committee. In 2001, some top MD birders were asked to predict which species would be the next to appear in our state. Phil will update that survey, indicating which species have since been recorded and which are currently under review. For those that have yet to appear, Phil will cover field identification and give us tips on where and when to look for them. 7:30 PM, Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, October 19

MEETING. **Caroline.** 7:30 PM. Meet *Jessica Conley*, Park Services Associate of Tuckahoe and Martinak SP. Hear all that is going on at the two parks and with "Scales and

Tales." Jessica will bring some feathered friends with her to the meeting. Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. Contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or firefly5845@hotmail.com, for more info.

Saturday, October 21

Baltimore. Morning Walk at Ft. McHenry. See Sept 6 listing. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Baltimore. Northampton Furnace Trail. Level walk through mixed woods and brushy habitats to the edge of Loch Raven Res. Good chance for Winter Wrens, late lingering robins, and waterfowl. Meet 8 AM at Dulaney Valley Rd and Chapelwood Ln, 2 miles north of Beltway exit 27. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Harford. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Full-day adventure at "The Hook" and adjacent birding hotspots. The muddy impoundments, fresh and saltwater marshes, and wave-washed beaches afford great numbers and good views of shore- and waterbirds. Bring lunch. Meet at 7 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Contact leader Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787, for details.

Tri-County. Assawoman Bay WMA, MD, and Indian River Inlet, DE. Half day. Searching for coastal migrants. Bring lunch. Meet 7:30 AM at Asbury Methodist Church, east parking lot (Wesley Dr side), Camden Ave, Salisbury. Leader TBA.

Howard. Sparrow Big Day. Full day. This intensive excursion will cover all the sparrow hotspots of Howard Co. The goal is to find as many sparrow species as possible. Can we hit 12? Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Bring lunch. Limit: 12. Facilities at some spots. Call Bonnie Ott, 410-461-336, to sign up.

Sunday, October 22

Talbot. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. Waterfowl and woodland species. No breakfast. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651 or dannypoet@hotmail.com.

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 3 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Montgomery. Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Half day. Meet 8 AM at the entrance. Early waterfowl and sparrows. For reservations (required) and directions, contact leader, Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com.

Monday October 23

MEETING. **Tri-County.** Program TBA. 7 PM at Asbury United Methodist Church, Fox Room, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, October 24

Howard. Meadowbrook Park. 2 hrs. Meet 8 AM at P&R lot near bridge. Walk along the marsh edges of this newly developed park. Second growth should produce some sparrows. Hawks will be flying over. Facilities available. Leader: Jo Solem, 301-725-5037.

MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER. **Washington.** Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Dinner starts at 6 PM. Please bring your own plate, utensils, drink, and a dish to share. Meeting starts at 7:30 PM, program TBA. Call 301-797-8454 for add'l info.

Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Sept 5 for details. Leader: Josie Gray, 410-922-1837.

Friday, October 27

Harford. Eden Mill. Biologist Mark Johnson will demonstrate the art and science of handling birds, while leader Les Eastman follows up with a guided tour and instructions on how to identify confusing fall

birds. Meet 8 AM at the Joe Vangrin Memorial Pavilion, about .5 mi up the road from Eden Mill House. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 for details.

Saturday, October 28

Anne Arundel. Dyke Marsh and Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA. Half day. Early wintering landbirds and possibly waterfowl. Meet 7:30 AM at the Parole P&R. Leader: Juanita Tate, 410-266-6043.

Frederick. Fall at Audrey Carroll. Dave Smith will lead a trip to search for those pesky little brown jobs (sparrows) and other migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at the Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. Contact Dave Smith, 410-549-7082, for more info.

Sunday, October 29

Talbot. Ferry Neck. Resident and migrant landbirds and waterfowl. Breakfast hosts: Luther and Cordy Tucker. Depart 7 AM from St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165.

Howard. Rockburn Branch Park. Half day. Meet 8 AM in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. Moderate but lengthy walking through the woods and fields of Howard's largest county park. Looking for late migrants. Great for hawkwatching. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available. Leaders: Karen Darcy, 410-552-9342, and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sept 2 for details. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, November 1

Baltimore. Morning walk at Ft. McHenry. See Sept 6 listing. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 25)

H Harford. Mariner Point Park. Enjoy the ease and accessibility of paved paths while birding with leader Tom Congersky along this waterway and wooded park. Nestled between the Gunpowder Marsh and the slow waters of Foster Branch, the varied habitats and paved trails of this park make for good birding and a comfortable walk. Meet near the pavilion at the back parking lot at 8 AM. Contact Tom at 410-658-4137 for details.

MEETING. **Carroll.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM. Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Karen Mobley, karenm657@earthlink.net.

Thursday, November 2

MEETING. **Frederick.** *George Jett* will present "A Snapshot of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX: Going Digital." George has switched to digital photography and took his new toy to one of North America's best birding areas during peak migration. 7 PM. C. Burr Artz Library. Frederick. Info: Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

Friday, November 3

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Jo Ann Abell*, naturalist, avid birdwatcher, and writer, will present "The Northern Mockingbird: All You Ever Wanted to Know About the Mockingbird but Were Afraid to Ask." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

DINNER MEETING. **Harford.** Enjoy a famous "Churchville Presbyterian dinner" followed by a keynote speaker. Cost \$11. 7 PM at the Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22&MD 136. Contact Eileen Nack at 410-272-7017 or jmnack@comcast.net to make reservations.

Saturday-Sunday, November 4-5

H Frederick. Town Hill Overnight. We will stay at a local B&B on Sat night and visit the famous (in MD, anyway) hawkwatch. This is a good time of year for Northern Goshawks

and Golden Eagles. For info and reservations, contact David Smith, 410-549-7082.

Saturday, November 4

H Harford. Owl Prowl. Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech expected with Saw-whet and Long-eared a possibility. Dress warmly and meet at Eden Mill's lower lot at 6 PM. Contact Dave Webb, 410-939-3537 for more details.

H Howard. Alpha Ridge Park and Landfill. Meet 8 AM at the park. Moderate to difficult walking through the fields looking for lingering sparrows and early winter arrivals. The landfill has a possibility of hosting rarities. Facilities at the park. Leader Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler Natural Area. 7:30 AM. See listing for Sept 2.

ANNUAL BANQUET. **Allegany.** Keynote Speaker: *Dr. Gwen Brewer*. Gwen will describe her trip to Ecuador. Banquet starts at 5:30 PM at the Frostburg United Methodist Church Social Hall, 48 Main St. Please call Charlotte Folk, 301-689-6587, to make reservations. Call Charlotte or Barbara Gaffney, 301-895-4646 for more info. Cost for the dinner is \$13 (students \$10), which includes tax and gratuities. Please send payment to Charlotte Folk at 179 Mt. Pleasant St, Frostburg, MD 21532.

Sunday, November 5

H Talbot. Wye Island. Early waterfowl, sparrows, and sandpipers. No breakfast. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651 or dannypoet@hotmail.com.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at the west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely.

Facilities available. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643.

Saturday, November 11

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Waterbirds and Landbirds. Meet 8 AM. Level, 2-mile walk Possible Bald Eagle, E. Bluebird, Redhead, and Common Loon. Scopes useful. From Balt Beltway/I-695, take exit 27/Dulaney Valley Rd north, go several miles, cross large bridge over reservoir, and bear right immediately. Continue to first left, Stone Hill Rd. Go about 100 yards, turn around, and then park on your right. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

H Harford. Hidden Valley/Upper Deer Creek. Join local resident and natural historian Dennis Kirkwood in search of kinglets, creepers, and other denizens of the northern forests. Meet 7 AM at Hidden Valley (N end of Madonna Rd). Contact Dennis at 410-692-5905 for more info.

H Patuxent. Turkey Point. Depart 7:30 AM and travel to Turkey Point for a day of hawkwatching. For additional information and reservations, contact Bob Elvander, 301-776-5690.

Sunday, November 12

H Talbot. Prime Hook NWR, DE. Bring lunch. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader TBD.



EVEN MORE SHOREBIRDS



Shorebirds of North America: The Photographic Guide.

Dennis Paulson. Princeton University Press, 2005. 361 pp. \$29.95

Shorebirds of North America, Europe, and Asia: A Guide to Field Identification.

Stephen Message and Don Taylor. Princeton University Press, 2005. 224 pp. \$35.00

The Shorebird Guide.

Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 477 pp. \$24.95

Maybe it's testament to the difficulties that even veteran birders have identifying shorebirds. Or maybe it's just a reflection of publishers' apparent beliefs that birders have an insatiable appetite for field guides of all sorts. Whatever the reason, three new books that concentrate on shorebirds are now available, bringing the day just a little closer that the average birder will actually be able to identify most shorebirds, even if they are a mile off in heavy mist.

These three books are very different from one another. Paulson's is the most straightforward in organization and layout, and features many splendid photographs, which the Italian printer reproduces beautifully. It covers 94 shorebird species, including just about every vagrant recorded in North and Central America. The species accounts are easy to read, but there is not very much discussion of how to distinguish between and among similar species.

Taylor (author) and Message (artist) also are comprehensive in their coverage, but the book seems cramped and "busy." Flying birds are placed in an entirely different section than standing birds. The painted images are workmanlike, but the plates simply do not show the subtleties

of plumage and shape that are so prominent and useful a feature of the other two books, which rely entirely on photographs. The introductory section on general identification tips is very well done.

The O'Brien/Crossley/Karlson book is by far the most ambitious of the three, and to my mind also the most valuable. It combines an emphasis on a "jizz" approach, which experienced birders use almost unconsciously, with a surprisingly extensive discussion of plumage and feathering. The sheer number of photographs and the sparkling reproduction job performed by the Singapore printer are truly impressive.

Beware, though: this is NOT a book for the beginning shorebirder. Rather, it is a book to be studied and read by birders (such as this reviewer) whose ability to identify shorebirds has reached a plateau falling far short of mastery. Its relatively low price also gives it a lot of bang for the buck. Beginning birders would do well to stick to the standard field guides (especially Kaufman's *Birds of North America*, which does a great job of illustrating waders) before tackling any of the three specialty books.

A final note: there is a wide-open field for a good instructional DVD product for the identification of North American shorebirds. The sole offering currently available—the Walton and Dodge *Guide to Shorebirds of Eastern North America* (Brownbag Productions, \$24.95)—is a great disappointment. It takes no advantage of the DVD medium and adds insult to injury by including two species in its final quiz that are not even described in the main section.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

Wanted

Old birding and nature magazines,
to use in programs with
middle school children.

Contact Gayle Bach-Watson,
bachwats@erols.com.

REPORTING BANDED BIRDS

Bands and color markers should be reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory, via either 1-800-323-BAND or www.pwrc.usgs.gov (choose *Monitoring* and then *Bird Banding Laboratory* and *How to Report a Band*).

If you are reporting a color marker such as goose collars, give the collar and code colors and the codes plus species, location, and date; add your name and address for a Certificate of Appreciation.

—Kathy Klimkiewicz, Biologist
USGS Patuxent WRC BBL

BOOK REVIEW

The Shorebird Guide, Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson • Houghton Mifflin 2006. 477 pp. \$24.95



This is certainly one of the best field guides ever written.

TSG is a photo guide—more than 870 color photos, according to the book jacket. Some birders hate photo guides, insisting that only drawings can clearly show the necessary field marks. Indeed, the problems of exposure, lighting, and camera angle can be immense. The TSG has no such problems; it is filled with

sharp and beautiful photos. Even better, there are photos that are fuzzy and photos at odd camera angles or in poor light—just the way you would see the bird in the field—and all accompanied by some enlightening text that uses the photo to make a point about identification.

TSG promises a simplified approach to shorebird ID. This approach begins with relative size, structure, behavior, and voice. In other words, ID based on jizz, a concept familiar to most birders but often neglected in favor of plumage details. And there lies the problem for most birders, because the plumage details of shorebirds are generally not as dramatic as those of spring warblers or winter ducks. Worse, many shorebirds seem to have a “twin”—was that Dowitcher Short-billed or Long-billed? TSG approaches these problems head-on, pairing numerous side-by-side photos of similar species, and explaining in exceptionally clear text how to use differences in structure to get going in the right direction.

TSG opens with a short general introduction to shorebirding, complete with three excellent photos illustrating shorebird topography (a real boon when it does become time to discuss plumage). Individual species accounts follow, with multiple photos and explanatory text—and quizzes—quizzes

that make you look more carefully (yes, the answers are in the back of the book). The photo sections cover 48 regular North American species, 44 “rarities and regional specialties,” 9 examples of hybrid species, and 3 examples of aberrant plumage/structures. There are excellent sections on willet, whimbrel, and dunlin subspecies. The material on stint ID and its problems is critical for anyone searching for stints in North America. Kenn Kaufmann’s fine range maps use the same very good color/shading scheme found in his general North American guide.

A section of text (separate from the photos) covers status, taxonomy, behavior, migration, molt, and vocalizations for each species. Finally, just to drive the point home, the inside back cover features Michael O’Brien’s outstanding shorebird silhouettes.

If TSG has a limitation, it is slight on the major conservation issues facing shorebirds. I would have liked more, but there are many places to go for that information and no book can do everything.

Shorebirds were one of the first families to get a book-length treatment—the classic *Shorebirds* by Peter Hayman, John Marchant, and Tony Prater (1986). That book helped birders develop an appreciation for this fascinating family, and the result has been a real advance in ID techniques. TSG is a big step up in the literature. Pair it with Dennis Paulson’s excellent photo guide *Shorebirds of North America* (2005) for intensive study. Then buy the yearly subscription to the online version of a masterwork—*Birds of North America, Life Histories for the 21st Century*.

—John Bjerke
Montgomery Bird Club

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

...for **Fall Count Data**, deadline October 9.
Contact Chuck Stirrat, 410-531-2417

...for **Research Proposals**. Deadline December 1. Grants are available for ornithological research conducted in Maryland. For info, contact Gwen Brewer, glbrewer@comcast.net

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